



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

THE
HONOURABLE MISS FERRARD

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "HOGAN M.P."



600056153Q





THE
HON. MISS FERRARD.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "HOGAN, M.P."

"Only a learner,
Quick one or slow one;
Just a discerner,
I would teach no one.
I am earth's native:
No rearranging it!
I be creative,
Chopping and changing it?"
BROWNING.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON.

1877.

(All Rights Reserved.)

251. d. 914.



THE HONOURABLE MISS FERRARD.

CHAPTER I.

“Mon avis est, qu’on ne peut créer des personnages que lorsqu’on a beaucoup étudié les hommes, comme on ne peut parler une langue qu’à la condition de l’avoir sérieusement appris.”—DUMAS.



HE mail from Ballycormack to Darraghstown, a rickety old outside car, painted red, with her Majesty's initials interlaced in yellow paint on the back of the well, carried on the 18th of September, 187—, an unusual burden. A tourist on one side, and his luggage, which balanced him nicely,

carefully fastened on the other seat. The tourist was a man of about thirty-five, dressed in a shooting-suit of heather mixture, with knickerbockers and stout buttoned boots, one of which dangled carelessly below the footboard as he leaned back on the well. He was a strongly-built man, with a tanned face and bright English blue eyes, which roved over the landscape incessantly and intelligently. The driver's head was bent to one side, following with his eyes the outstretched hand of his fare, and answering the never-ceasing questions with which he plied him.

"That is Darraghmore—eh?" the tourist said.

"That's Darraghmore, your honour; I'll pull up one minute here at the gap in the hedge, and then you'll have a clane view of the front. All the land you can see now on the far side of the river was the

estate, up over there to the foot of Tobergeen, an' the finest pasture ever you seen lies there beyond to the wood. The demesne was five miles long, and the river ran by the bounds of it; Jim Devereux's farm 'tis called now."

"What's that I see to the left? a ruin?"

"Yes, your honour, that's a ruin—one of the owld castles Cromwell tumbled down. What you see is the new castle, though it's owld enough too."

"It does not look very old."

"Not from this, sir. There's more than three miles between you and it, but if you were nearer there's not a windy, nor a chimney, nor, for the matter of that, a floor left in it——"

"A floor, do you say! What happened then?"

"Augh, sir, the old lord before he was

bate up entirely was livin' in it, an' sure they didn't care what they done wid it. So they burned the flooring of all the rooms they didn't want, an' a part of the stairs an' the dures; just whatever come handy. Get along wid ye, Bess."

Then Bess, a wiry old grey mare, received a cut of the whip that made her start at a pace that soon left the great bleak house behind. Mr. Satterthwaite forgot his cigar, and turned his head to watch, as long as the car kept the valley road, the beautiful view that lay beneath.

"They're a terrible crew, them Ferrards," the driver began again after awhile. "Like most of the rale owld stock, they were bad livers. Anyhow they're broke now, horse and foot."

"Are they? Who were they? Lord Darraghmore—I know that name. I've seen it beyond a doubt," he added to

himself, "but I never heard it within my recollection—was Lord Darraghmore married? Tell me about the family."

The driver was only too happy to be allowed to do this; and his passenger, having rekindled his cigar, disposed himself comfortably to listen.

"Married? wisha! he was married twice itself, an' has sons and daughters as old as what I am, an' that's forty odd. He wasn't more than eighteen when he ran away to the Continent with a Dublin lady. She was no match for him, an' when she died he married an Englishwoman; she'd a couple of thousand, I b'lieve—but that was a drop in the sea to me lord."

"Are there any children living?"

"There's children, sir, as I said, plenty but whether they are all to the good or no, I can't say. The eldest son of all is in the Austrian army, another's gone to the


diggings, wan was shot, an' wan was drowned at sea, an' wan died—anyhow they say he died. Then there's three boys by the last mar'ge. I b'lieve they're wid him, wherever he is."

"No daughters?"

"Ay! wan married some fellow, an' she's livin' in Paris wid him—God forgive me if I'm tellin' a lie, but they do say he can't live in this country; an' wan married a sailor chap, a captain of some boat they were travellin' by. There's wan by the second wife, too."

"Were there no relatives? no friends?" asked the Englishman, thinking it strange that in this tuft-hunting age the Misses Ferrard could not have found mates more suitable to their rank in life than the "fellow in Paris" or the "sailor chap."

"I dunno, sir; 'tis twenty years nearly



since they left this, an' I disremember ; but my father—God ha' mercy on him—I mind him sayin' Ferrard o' Darraghmore was worth, once on a time, twenty thousand a year. Augh ! they're a terrible lot. They'd go through the Bank, sir ; not but what these never had so much. Claude Ferrard, that's the last lord, he kept race-horses an' a pack of hounds ; a hogshead of whiskey stood in the hall ; an' I believe, when this man got it, what wid Jews, an' lawyers, an' leases fallin', there wasn't more than three thousand a year left. He just came home here from abroad wid his wife, when Claude dropped, an' he brought a pack of furriners wid him ; then they just lathered away till he had to run in the night !”

“ Ah ! indeed, the good old style of living, hey ?”

‘ Bedad, yes, sir ; rale old stock, them


Ferrards, an' as handsome men and women as ever walked !"

"None of them ever did anything for themselves — anything for a living, I mean?"

"Is it gentry like them?" returned the driver scornfully. "No Ferrard that ever stepped yet set hand to anything, if it wasn't the stock of a gun or maybe a fishing-rod; I remember Claude, the lord that will be, the greatest shot ever I seen. Many a time when I was a boy I followed him into the bogs after the ducks an' snipe. Sure it was that way the second wan was killed."

"Ah ! by accident?"

"Be accident," replied the driver, shutting up his lips tightly and nodding his head significantly, as if to give his listener to infer that there was a great deal more in it than he chose to tell.



Mr. Satterthwaite did not press him; from what he had said of the family in general it was easy to deduce that the "second one" had met with a violent death, deserved or not. He leaned his elbow on the well, and giving the Jarvey a cigar, lighted a fresh one for himself, and letting his eyes wander at pleasure over the wild vale of the Darragh river, amused himself conjuring up pictures of the savage tribe that had once peopled the desolate house of Darraghmore.


A mellow September sunset gilded the birch copses and lighted up the red trunks of the pines that crowned the hill; a light breeze, scented with the ripe autumn bouquet of the woods, swept the leaves, which were yet crisp and dry, in fantastic dances along the road. The river, a mere brook, but deep and swift, was now rushing angrily through a rocky channel below, and

sent up a hollow roar. The rooks were hovering over their nests in a black cloud, and their hoarse cawing was borne fitfully on the wind. A flock of wild geese, flying southward, passed overhead with their weird clanging cry.

“That’s for a hard winter,” said the driver, pointing up to the emigrants with his whip; “an’ the haws are thick an’ early too.”

The car was going down the hill now, and about a mile ahead could be seen the pale thin smoke of Darraghstown. It soon turned into a broad high-road running level with the river-side. Here the river joined its waters to those of a broader stream which, wide and smooth, was almost hidden from sight by the tall reeds which lined both banks and swung their tasselled heads with the wind.

“That’s the Rack, sir; there it goes off



by Lord Comerford's park. He holds the most of the old lord's ground now."

"Lord Comerford? Oh yes, to be sure, he has a place here."

"He has a place here," continued the driver, "sure enough, your honour, but divvle a toe of the rackrentin' blackguard has been in it these two years. He have an agent, though, an', be jabbers, he won't be left in it long."

The driver closed his sentence with an impressive snap of his jaws. He would have liked to entangle Mr. Satterthwaite in a discussion on Lord Comerford's doings, and to terrify him, as he loved to do all strangers, with a history of the vengeancees planning for the absentee and his agents; but his listener was well up to that sort of thing, so turned a deaf ear to him.


"Whose house is that?" he asked abruptly, indicating a handsome cottage in

the Swiss style, situated on the brow of a hill.

“That’s Really’s, sir—Reilly he was in Cork, before he got rich an’ grand, an’ madam they call his wife! Over there to the left of you, the brown house with the garden”—he pointed with his whip to a big straggling edifice—“that’s Hoolahan’s; he made all his money in the town; Strains has his shop now. There’s another nice house an’ place out on the Comerford road, it belongs to Tom Fair; he’s a jah pea and a great man entirely.”

“Jah pea, jah pea,” repeated the Englishman to himself in a puzzled tone of voice. “Oh! I’ve got it now—Justice of the Peace, J.P. Well,” he went on aloud, “you have a good sprinkling of respectable people. Darraghstown is not so badly off after all.”

“No, bedad, as times goes,” replied the



carman, flinging away the ash of his cigar.

"Tell me, my man, which is the best hotel in the town?"

"Best! your honour? I'll take you to the best, never fear; 'twill be easy doin' that!" he added with a grin, "seein' there's only wan in the place. That's the weir, sir," said he, pointing to the left of the bridge by which the car was now passing; "an' do you see that big ash tree? just by the stump of that Mr. Hawtrey was shot dead. Poor Con O'Moore! he was a grand aim, to be sure."

"What had Mr. Hawtrey done?" asked the tourist in a dry tone, after a long look in the direction of the ash tree.

"Done, is it, your honour? raisin' the rints, an' harassin', an' parsecutin'. He was noticed to drop it a half dozen ov times. So, bedad, poor Con was


brought down to him, an' then there it was."

"Con was hanged, eh?" said Mr. Satterthwaite, whose ear had detected a sorrowful tone in the pronunciation of Mr. O'Moore's first name.

"Ay, faith, sir! the poor boy, he earned his hangin' on that bit of wild justice."

"I think so, indeed. Wild justice!" repeated Mr. Satterthwaite to himself, with a laugh. "I wonder has this gentleman any idea of the context of Lord Bacon's saying. Who first taught these wretches to abuse that expression, I wonder? and has my loquacious friend got wind of my intended purchase of Rosslyne estate in this district? if so, these delightful anecdotes may have a special meaning."

The car had crossed the river now by a broad, single-arched bridge, and Mr.




Satterthwaite was busy looking at a double row of miserable cabins, with sunk roofs and dreadfully dilapidated walls. These gave way soon to a row of plastered houses two stories high, the lower parts of which seemed to be occupied by shops; then they came to the market-place, an open square. At right angles with this ran a fine highway leading out across the country, and flanked for a short distance by houses of somewhat better appearance than those of the main street; but equally old and ill-kept externally. The river, which had taken a bend to the right after passing beneath the bridge, ran behind these houses.

“That’s the chapel down there, your honour,” said the driver; “and the red house with the white wall to the garden, that’s the priest’s house—’tis the biggest of them. Then Dr. Cartan’s and the

dispensary, and next to him—this one we're passin' now—is Lawyer Perry's."

The tourist looked up quickly at the name, and glanced at the house indicated by his driver. It stood in a little way from the unpaved footpath, from which an ill-kept front garden divided it. The windows were dirty, and some of them were without blinds; and the yellow plaster was discoloured, and in many places had fallen off. A number of faces, most of them young, presented themselves at the panes of the lower front windows as the mail passed.

"Them's the Miss Perrys," explained the driver; "'tis a wonder they're not out in the street; they mostly meets the mail-cart every night. Fine blossoms they are. Owld Perry can give every wan o' 'em twelve or fifteen hundred; small good that money'll do any one that gets it."



"How many of them are there?" asked his passenger, who seemed to make some mental calculation.

"How did he make it, is it, your honour?" replied the driver, purposely misunderstanding him. "Oh! how does all lawyers make their money? The Old Boy helps them. They say Perry was one ov them that helped to sell up owld Lord Darraghmore; but how do I know?" he added cautiously. "He is an awful man hereabouts anyhow. He has a couple of farms there beyant Comerford Park, he got from the poor men that had them, lending money to them and closin' on their leases. Oh! he's an owld rogue—a condemned owld villain!"


"Is that a mill?" asked Mr. Satterthwaite, as they passed the corner house—a large, rambling old building, with latticed windows and with old gables to

which the ivy formed a green framework, and no doubt helped to hold secure. The front was nearly hidden by rows of overgrown holly and poplar trees. Beside the house, and separating it from the bridge, was a high wall, over which appeared the slated roofs of outhouses which looked like stores.

“It was a mill, sir, but now the building is used for wool-stores — Milligan’s ’tis called; there’s no one in it but the old couple that owns it all. Sure if you wanted lodgings they’d take your honour and welcome——”

“No, no ! take me to the hotel.”

In a moment or two the car drew up at the post-office. This was a little crockery-shop, on one side of which was a wooden partition, dividing off a space of about four feet square, where the telegraphist, who was also postmistress, fulfilled her joint



avocations. There were two or three other mail-cars which had arrived some time before, and the bags were being made up for the seven o'clock mail train which was to be met at a station five miles away.

"Come on here, Batterstown mails," said a hanger-on; "ye're late a quarter of an hour already."

Mr. Satterthwaite had got down, and having taken his valise, was counting out the fare to the driver.

"'Twas the stops as done it, captain dear," he said, with a sly, appealing look.

This was irresistible, so an extra two-shilling-piece was forthcoming to mend matters, and with a grin that argued but scant reverence for outraged official punctilio, the driver disappeared into the murky shop, and the Englishman crossed the street to the Darraghmore Arms Hotel.

"Private rooms, sir, this way," said the landlord. "Dinner? yes, sir, directly; what would you like?"


"What would I like?" thought Mr. Satterthwaite, rather amused at the query, and divining by the light of experience what this apparently unlimited field of choice would resolve itself into.

He was not hungry, and having a mind to chaff the landlord, replied literally :

"Have you got a lobster? What soup have you?"

"No lobster, sir; we don't have fish unless specially ordered from Waterford."

"Well now, my good fellow," said the stranger with a smile, sitting down in an easy-chair, "to save trouble let's say at once bacon and cabbage, or rashers and eggs?"



Now it was the landlord's turn to smile.

"We can do better for you than that, sir; I've a good dish of river trout just come in, and there's a cold partridge. Could give you a fowl, sir."

"Thank you; I'll have the trout and the cold partridge. I'll go out for a stroll; you may have a fire lighted here when I return."

So Satterthwaite set out to stretch his legs for half an hour by a walk about the town; he had plenty of roads to choose from. The main street, and, at right angles with it, the Comerford road or the Dublin highway. They were all dry and inviting-looking; there was nothing doing in the little town. A few country women stood at the corners with pails of milk, which they were selling to the townsfolk. A little crowd of loungers was gathered near

the post-office, reading the Dublin papers which had just arrived by the mail. Flocks of geese, half-starved dogs, and lank-bodied pigs roamed the streets at their wills.

He walked up the town, and passed the rows of cabins and the cemetery, and ascending the slope on which lay this last, entered the parish chapel. It was a large limestone edifice, imposing enough outside. The interior was a fair specimen of the meretricious taste he had observed in all the chapels he had visited during his stay in the south. The limestone pillars, tolerably well-hewn square blocks, had all been plastered, as had also the solid mouldings, and the walls, which in addition were nearly covered with stencilled patterns in glaring pink, green, and yellow. Bands of hideous little wheels, meant to represent roses, and acorns growing upon nothing, ran round

and round, and up and down everywhere. The chapel was very large and lofty in proportion, and the effect of these stencilled wreathings in certain positions, such as over a lofty window, was simply that of a smear such as a gigantic dirty finger might make. The altar was of white Carrara marble—of the most approved style of confectioner's work. On it were placed pots of French india-rubber flowers, selected, as the tourist noted with a smile, without much regard to the "unities," if one may so express it, of season. Roses placed beside camellias, and white lilies and dahlias blooming simultaneously. The altar must have cost a large sum, to judge by the fineness of the carving, which was utterly lost owing to its comparatively small size.

Satterthwaite sat down on a bench to rest, and leaned back, for he was a little

weary after his long drive, and unused, moreover, to the jolting of the barbarous vehicle.

Above the high altar was a large stained-glass window. The evening sun shone on this, and the rays fell through, split into gorgeous rainbow-like bands of purple, crimson, and yellow, which streamed into the sanctuary, and made the aisles and side-chapels look dark and shadowy. The lamp before the altar seemed dead ; its little flame was so colourless in comparison.

The chief feature of the interior of the church was, however, the huge painted statues distributed about at the bases of the pillars ; they were gorgeously coloured —scarlet and sky-blue being the predominant tones of the drapery ; even the eyes, hair, and cheeks were liberally tinted. St. John, the patron saint of the church,

who was in the place of honour, looked like a typical South German with his turquoise blue eyes, long blond ringlets, and vividly pink fingers, which the blue and gold garments set off to perfection.

“Who first conceived the design of such a creation?” thought Mr. Satterthwaite, staring at it in wonder. “After all,” he continued to himself, “it may be some comfort to those poverty-stricken creatures, who frequent the church, to think that in heaven, which is specially reserved for poor people, they will be clothed like these saints.”

Then a low muttering sound reached his ears. A couple of poor bare-footed old women had come in noiselessly, and were praying; one with her arms uplifted, in the form of a cross, under the lamp. The red glare of its flame was now

apparent, for the sunbeams had vanished, and with them the glories of the "storied window richly dight." Wretchedly poor the old creatures looked ; one, with a white, wrinkled face, had an air of quiet thoughtfulness, almost of refinement, about her, as she prayed, the beads of her old black rosary slipping, one by one, through her fingers, and her eyes fixed immovably on the altar.

A window was open at the side, and the swallows, not yet away to their winter quarters beyond the sea, were flitting to and fro from their nests ; there was a heavy odour of lime and paint, and Satterthwaite began to feel the place oppressive. He got up to go, and taking some small change from his pocket, laid it on the ground beside the old women ; they took it up gratefully, with many muttered benedictions as he walked away, having

evidently directed their orisons into a new channel.

“Now to the post,” thought Mr. Satterthwaite; “the crowd will have dispersed by this. I hope to get letters and papers from Limerick; I hope they won’t have forgotten them.”

As he strolled back down the main street, the little shops beginning to light their lamps — gas had not yet got to Darraghstown—cast a pale reflection on the cobblestone pavement. He found, as he anticipated, the place tolerably free from loungers; received the packet, and, bestowing it for the nonce in the pocket of his great-coat, on thoughts of dinner intent, sought the inn once more.

As he turned the corner he almost knocked against a trio of loud-voiced girls, advancing at a pace that was almost a run, from the main street in the direction of

the Comerford road. They all wore felt hats, flying off the backs of their heads, and their round staring eyes looked out under "fringed" hair. One, who, from the fact of her wearing short skirts and a long yellow mane of ill-kempt hair down her back, seemed to be about fifteen or sixteen, turned and looked after the oddly-dressed stranger with a giggle. The others, who might have been any age from eighteen to twenty-five, walked on demurely enough. Satterthwaite remembered the eager faces he had seen looking out of Lawyer Perry's windows, and the driver's comments.

"Poor girls," thought he, "shut up in such a place as Darraghstown. I don't wonder the coming and going of the mail should be the event of the day."

By this time he had reached his room. The fire was sparkling in the grate ; a fire of sods, piled up evenly in the grate, and

blazing intensely. No fire so picturesque—not even the split pine fires of Norway. The cloth had been laid on a round table at one side of the fire, a sofa drawn up to the other ; altogether it looked very snug and inviting.

The river trout was capital, the partridge by no means to be despised ; and the host uncorked a bottle of dry sherry which, considering where he was, fairly astonished the tourist. Dinner over, the landlord presented himself to remove the cloth, and asked Satterthwaite if he would care for a cup of coffee. He declined this, however, and having ordered tea at nine o'clock, and made the necessary inquiries about the morning mail train to Dublin, lay down on the sofa to read his correspondence.

Sir Frederick Redingham, whose shooting-box he had quitted that morning

before post-hour, had promised to forward everything to Darraghmore. Nothing was there of importance; an invitation to go up to Banff for a fortnight's deer-stalking.

"It might not be a bad plan to go north," thought Mr. Satterthwaite lazily.

Then he lighted a cheroot; the long drive in the cool mountain air had left a sort of drowsiness of mind and body. He tried to read the paper; there was nothing in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. A Dublin paper rolled out of the next wrapper torn open. What did he care about Dublin? To be sure there was the advertisement of that property he had been told about. Wherever are the Landed Estates' Courts advertisements? At last—"All that and those—hum—hum! Barony of Darragh—barony of Clonfisk—acreage—turbary—" Mr. Satterthwaite threw it away also, and

took up a tiny ill-printed county paper—a weekly—issued that very morning.

Almost the first thing that caught his eye was the following paragraph :

“It may be of interest to some of our readers to learn that we have received intelligence of the death of Lady Darraghmore, which lamentable event took place in Galway on Thursday morning. Her ladyship was the second wife of Lord Darraghmore, and leaves three sons and one daughter to mourn her loss.”

“Doesn’t say whose daughter her ladyship was,” noted he, laying down the paper and composing himself for a nap till tea-time ; “nor how old either. I wonder if the peerage will ever hear of that lamentable demise ?”

It seemed to him that he had only been

asleep a few minutes when the landlord came in with tea.

“ I say, what’s this in the Darraghstown —*Ballynahinch Advertiser*, eh ? I mean the death of Lady Darraghmore.”

“ Yes, sir. No one knew anything of it till that came out this afternoon. The family are quite broken up, sir—have left Darraghmore this twenty years or more.”

“ Who was the second Lady Darraghmore ?” he asked.

“ No one knows, sir, hereabouts ; though she lived here for some time. An English-woman—she had money I believe, too.”

“ They were very extravagant ?”

“ Extravagance, sir, did all the mischief ; and they are all as proud and fiery as can be. Lord Darraghmore must be seventy now—fully seventy, and a fine old family they are, too.”

Satterthwaite dismissed his host, and

promised himself to make inquiries about this fine old Irish family as soon as he reached London. He meant to start next morning, and counted upon arriving there the following day.



CHAPTER II.

“ Voir et peindre sont deux. Tout ce que l'artiste peut espérer de mieux, c'est d'engager ceux qui ont des yeux à regarder aussi.”




NE gusty evening, late in September, there might have been seen in the window of a house situated in one of the old narrow streets of Galway, the face of a young girl pressed close against the dingy pane. The street led down to the Claddagh; and from her post of observation the watcher could see a narrow strip of Galway Bay and a part

of the harbour wall. On this was gathered a number of people on the look-out for the fishing-boats, whose red sails were now rounding the headland into the bay. Up and down the street passed the fishers, male and female, to whom the Claddagh, of savoury memory, is consecrated; and the shrill accents of the women, as they hurried to and fro, rose to the ears of the girl. She could not see the entry of the boats into the harbour, but she knew, from the attitudes and motions of those on the pier wall, that they were in sight; and also, that as soon as the first boat should reach the quay, the figures would disappear from her view, quitting their perch in eager haste to hail the fishers and learn their luck.

Nearly opposite to her window was one of the finest relics of Moorish architecture to be found in Galway—the horse-shoe

arches of the doors, the rich tracery of the lintels, the ornaments, medallion-shaped, let into the walls, and inscribed with some strange lettering, half defaced, and nearly hid by the grasses and weeds that had taken root among the cracks, all formed a picture to delight the eye. A tall, handsome peasant girl, straight and lithe as a willow wand, dressed in a skirt of the madder red worn by the Galway women, with a snowy kerchief pinned across her shapely bust, halted for a moment in the archway; and, laying down her basket, looked down the street towards the sea. The exquisite grace and naturalness of her *pose*, the brilliant colours of her dress, relieved against the grey stone framing, formed a picture that would have impressed itself indelibly on an artist's brain, until he reproduced it in tints as vivid on his canvas.



After a stay of a minute or two the girl was joined by a tall lad, whose leather boots reaching mid-leg showed him to belong to the folk of the Claddagh. The girl lifted her basket once more; he, with scant gallantry, trudged on beside her, his brawny fists buried in his pockets, and they disappeared from view.

The street seemed crowded now; nearly all the idlers thronged down to witness the arrival of the boats. The red skirts of the women formed picturesque bits of colour among the crowd, and their shrill, quick speech rang above the muttered English of the black-coated townsfolk. The dusk was falling now; the Angelus had rung from the chapel bells some time before, and the girl's eyes were strained to see the figures on the pier wall. She turned her head peevishly to reply to some one who addressed her; when she looked again,

she uttered a cry as if of relief. The watchers were all gone. Mauriade Blake's red petticoat (she was the tallest woman in the Claddagh) had disappeared. The fishing-boats were in.

"They're in now," she said, swinging herself leisurely off the window-ledge, and crossing the room to the fire-place.

"Hel, you can say so to Cawth, then," said some one from a dark corner by the fire.


The voice came from an old man who was stretched at full length on a sofa near the fire. As he spoke to the girl he raised his head, and the light from the turf fire fell on it. He must have been at one time a handsome man, tall and shapely, with a fine skin, and clearly cut, if somewhat weak features. A quantity of white hair still curled about his temples, and the

right hand, which hung listlessly down nearly touching the floor, was perfect in form. His attire consisted of a huge frieze great-coat wrapped over a double-breasted and tightly-buttoned frock-coat; neither collar nor shirt was to be seen, and an old greasy necktie covered the neck to the chin. He seemed feeble and weak, and spoke with a querulous trembling voice. A clay pipe was beside him on a chair, with a sheet of the *London Times*. A huge old wolf-dog lay on the floor, every now and again opening his bleared dull eyes, and looking affectionately at his master.

The girl turned away, and opening a door which led into a back room, disappeared from sight. Presently she came back; in her hand an old branched candlestick, grimy and ill-kept, in which were a pair of candles lighted. She set this on

the table near the old man, and then returned to her post by the window.

She was a slight unformed creature, perhaps sixteen years old. Her hair, thick and black, was plaited in one rough, loose tail, that hung nearly to her waist. It grew low on her forehead, but her temples were wide and clear; the eyebrows black, straight, and very close set; her eyes were a long almond shape, and their colour was the rarest, sweetest colour in the world, violet blue. The lashes were long and thick, and turned up at the ends. For the rest, the profile was irregular, the nose the least bit *retroussé*, and the upper lip rather short; but the teeth were the most beautiful little pearls when she smiled, which the Honourable Helena Ferrard did not often vouchsafe to do. The red lips parted, and they showed with a flash that was like a surprise. Her skin



was pale, naturally pale—perhaps olive would describe her complexion best; and the expression of her face, grievous to relate, was ill-tempered in the extreme. The straight, fine brows were almost always puckered in a frown, and the pout of her under lip, though in part natural, was also in great part acquired. It was a troubled, anxious little face altogether, and, though forbidding, a face with such a charm of its own, that one who saw it once must remember it ever after. Her figure was unformed, or angular. She had, like her father, fine hands and feet, but, truth to say, their unwashed condition detracted as much from the one as did the huge coarse brogues and knitted stockings from the other. She wore a skirt of black wool—just what the peasants had—so coarse that it might be taken for bearskin; a hideously-made tunic of cheap black

material ; no collar, no cuffs, no brooch, or attempt at girlish decoration of any kind. Such was the attire of Lord Darraghmore's daughter.

For at least twenty minutes she crouched in her window-seat, one arm resting on the deep window-sash, and her cheek lying on it. The old man got up off the sofa, and pushing the wolf-dog aside with a petulant gesture, began to walk slowly up and down the room. He had a tall figure, though the white head was sadly sunk between the shoulders, and the slovenliness of his dress, added to his slouching, broken gait, contributed almost equally to degrade his stature. The frieze great-coat, fastened round his neck by a looped thong, slipped and fell as he brushed against the table. He looked at it in a helpless, wondering way for a second, then pushed it with his foot beneath the table, and resumed his

tramp. The wolf-dog, whom not one of his master's gestures escaped, spied it, slunk across to where it lay, and walking round once or twice after his tail in dog fashion, lay down comfortably. The occupant of the window viewed both incidents unmoved and approving.

The flooring of the room was oak, but crusted with the dirt of ages. There was a high oak wainscoting all round; in this sundry nails had been driven, from which hung various articles of clothing. Among them a battered black hat, with a veil of new crape hanging loosely from it. In a corner was a stack of guns, fishing-rods, and spears of different sorts; powder-horns, shot-cases, and belts littered a small table in a corner. Newspapers, torn and dirty, were strewn here and there. The big deal-table in the middle of the room, and the smaller one in the corner,

with my lord's sofa, was all the plenishing to be seen. A wooden bench was scarcely visible in a recess, which evidently held the family wardrobe. Huge fishing-boots, tarpaulin coats and leggings, sticks, and straps, and head-gear were piled together. A little three-legged stool, set near the hearth—there was no grate, and the peat burned on the floor—seemed to indicate the place of the lady of the house.

"It's seven—past," Lord Darraghmore said at last, pausing in his walk to look at a huge old gold watch which he carried in his pocket.

The girl left her seat with an abrupt movement, and crossed to the back room, swinging the door roughly behind her as she did so.

"Cawth l!" she cried, after a glance round.

"Cawth l!"

"Well, what's it ye're needin' noo?"

snapped a cross voice from another door.

An old woman, carrying a kettle of water which she had been down to the street pump to fill, made her appearance. She was dressed much like the girl, save that she wore a decent white cap on her head, and a kerchief of thick grey wool was folded across her shoulders and chest. Her face was a curious study. Wrinkled and tinted like a last year's russet apple, it presented a mixture of cunning and malignity. Keen grey-blue eyes looked from under bushy brows, and from her almost toothless mouth issued a grating north of Ireland brogue. She advanced to the fire, and pulling towards her the chain which hung down the chimney, fastened the heavy iron kettle over the blazing stack of peats, grumbling all the while.

“ You Connaught deevils, splatterin’ and

pushin' for a drap watter. See to ma coats a' wat wi' them. Loupin', roupin' Connaught thieves !"

"Go down and tell them so," was Miss Ferrard's comment after a deliberate survey of her domestic's apparel. "Cook some fish ; the boats are in this half-hour."

"They're no come, though. Ye can just bide, an' I'll mak' the one job o' the cookin'."

Miss Ferrard's eyes flashed, and her level brows met in a frown. She walked past her rebellious menial, who had just seated herself on a low stool by the fire, and seized a gridiron which hung on the wall close by ; with the other hand she detached the kettle from its hook, then she planted the gridiron on the glowing fire, and cast a glance round in search of the fish.

The beldame, furious, rose from her

creepy stool, and interposed a forbidding hand. Just at that moment a tramp was heard on the stairs. The old woman darted to place the fish on the fire, and the girl marched back in calm indifference to the other room.

The door was opened violently, and three lads entered. One, who seemed, indeed, to have reached manhood, carried a number of lines, which he flung without more ado into the nearest corner; the other two carried between them a large open creel filled with fish—herring, skate, and different kinds of flat fish. The three might have been aged respectively from twenty to seventeen, broad-shouldered, athletic-looking fellows, dark of eye and skin, and with resolute, sullen faces, slovenly of dress and dour of manner like their sister.

Not one word of greeting did the fishers

vouchsafe. The creel was swung down close by the wall, and kicking their wet boots off with some difficulty, they set to grope under tables and in recesses for dry foot-covering. These found, after some delay, the two younger ones seated themselves at opposite corners of the hearth. The eldest, first kicking away an old lurcher dog who was snuffing hungrily around the creel of fish, went into the other room.

The old man paused in his walk, and turned his dull eye on the new-comer.

“Ha, Clan, what luck have you had?”

“Ugh!” growled the son, “not much; no good fish.” Then he seated himself on a chair by the fire, and held out his hands, reddened by exposure and the sea-water, over the cheerful blaze.

Clanrickarde, Charles, and Isidor—for so were named the three sons of Lord

Darraghmore by his second marriage with an Englishwoman, a dissenting tradesman's daughter, whose beauty (it was from her the family inherited their swarthy good looks) had attracted him in one of his rambles in England—had just at present a heavy task devolving upon them, neither more nor less than the imperative duty of providing the necessaries of life for their father and sister as well as themselves. Not, indeed, that it was anything unusual, for, since ever one of them had been able to set a trap, load a gun, or handle rod or spear, their services had been in requisition at odd times to supply the family larder.


It was not that Lord Darraghmore was penniless. His estates were gone, it is true, but there remained something out of the burning. A sister of his who had enjoyed during her life a rent-charge of

four hundred a year, had died some time after they had left Darraghmore, and on the death of her husband five or six years after, this income returned to the Ferrards. It was paid quarterly in instalments of a hundred pounds, sometimes more, sometimes less, being subject to the fluctuations to which all Irish incomes arising out of property of the description, namely, petty farms, are liable to. Four hundred a year might represent to some people a means of tolerably decent independence ; to the Ferrards it just afforded a few weeks' riotous living, to be followed by a period of borrowing, account-running wherever they could get credit, and even actual want. They migrated from town to town according as their habits became known, and, indeed, according to the degree of temperature to which the young men raised the social thermometer. Everywhere they ran head-

long into debt ; every quarter-day a few of the most pressing demands were settled, and when it came to the last, abandoning such of their worldly goods as they could not conveniently carry away with them, the brood, parent birds and all, dispersed, usually in the night-time and singly, to assemble again at some given point.

The children had grown up anyhow ; they were never rebuked, though often ill-treated. They were all perfectly ignorant ; the national schools were of course out of the question for them, pride forbade that idea. They learned somehow to read—a questionable advantage, to judge by the style of literature they affected—and to scrawl their names when called upon to do so. The old man was perfectly apathetic ; so long as he had a pipeful of tobacco in his tattered leather pouch, on which was stamped the crest and motto of the

Ferrards (a falcon with bloody beak, and the legend *Rapax*) almost effaced, he cared for nothing. He sent every quarter-day a pound to London to pay his quarterly subscription to the *London Times*; *Bell's Life* came every week for Clanrickarde. Nobody ever looked at the *Times* save the old lord; but even Helena, or, as she was familiarly called, Hel, took an interest in the racy style of the sporting oracle. For the rest, their reading consisted mainly of odd numbers of Beadle's American Library, the wild backwoods adventures, hair-breadth escapes therein related being eminently to their taste, and the less innocent histories of those British worthies Jack Sheppard, Blueskin, Charley Wag, and the like. Now and again, when the whim took them, and they chanced to have respectable clothes, which, to tell the truth, was very seldom, Helena and her youngest and



favourite brother Isidor would attend church—Lord Darraghmore never went. Clan and Char were always out.

As to society, they had none. Not one of the respectable families of the various places they visited ever called upon them ; a stranger was never allowed into their rooms on any pretext, and the wolf-dog and the other canine inmates of Cawth's apartment sufficiently protected their masters from intrusion. Lady Darraghmore had been as "queer," to use the common qualification of the family, as the rest of them, if not more so. Strange stories were current in Galway as to her death, and the manner of it. However, she was now a week buried, and outsiders, as well as her husband and children, had grown used to the loss. Cawth McGonigle, the nurse of the children, did all that was necessary for their comfort now as heretofore. They

missed her but little ; it was not in the Ferrard nature to show grief or feeling. Clan took the old broken arm-chair that her ladyship used to sit in opposite to his lordship's sofa ; Hel had her own creepy stool by the lug of the chimney, as of old, where she sat by the hour staring with her wide-open violet eyes into the red glow of the peats, or reading by their fitful light some wild story of Western adventure, fancying herself a squaw in a wigwam by Lake Huron, or roaming the prairies with Deer-slayer or the pioneers. Had she been a Catholic, some good-hearted priest would have made interest for the desolate neglected little girl, and have shipped her across the seas to some quiet Belgian convent, where she would have been tamed and trained into piety and industry, where one day she might have taken the veil, and passed a quiet dream-like life away

from the toil and strife of the wild nomads amongst whom her lines had fallen. Had she been a Catholic, things would have been different; the common people would have treated the family with more respect, they would have sympathised with them as "belonging to themselves;" their misfortunes would have been ascribed to "the troubles," to their rulers, to the English, just as they laid their own wretched condition to the charge of the aliens and heretics who lorded it over them. But the Ferrards were Protestants, stem and branch, consequently their poverty and degradation brought them only contumely. They were treated by the Catholics as the poor whites were treated in the slave states of America in former times, despised by the negroes, and almost disowned by their more fortunate fellow-citizens. They received none of the adulation and respect accorded so

lavishly to the estated heretic who drives his carriage and pair. As poor Protestants, shiftless and dirty as the Catholics themselves, they were held as creatures with whom even the devil had broken his compact. They were an anomaly, an anachronism, and unaccountable.

The young people were by no means unconscious of this, and doubtless it was some misgivings on the subject that had prompted the flight of the senior brood. Already Clan had given some dark hints of his feelings. While his mother lived, she would not hear of any change, but the young man was now growing tired of the everlasting fishing and hunting, and with his sprouting beard had come ideas of a wider range of living, of a state of existence where there was bigger game than rabbits and trout, varied in season by an

occasional buck or salmon filched from demesne or river.

Cawth, the nurse, sharp-eyed and observant, watched all these signs, and waited, knowing that the time was not far off when Clan would some early morning put on his stoutest boots, pat the old wolf-dog on the head, and go, as his brothers, the "lord" that was to be, and Brand and Louis had done before him, never to return. Then it would be Char's turn, unless fate, by some ugly thrust, such as had cut short the life of Walter, the second son, should interfere. Isidor and Helena would seek their fortunes together, and by that time the old lord and Cawth need not care.

Such were the Ferrards of Darraghmore.

After a short delay Cawth came in bearing a huge trencher of grilled fish. She laid this on a corner table for a moment, then

pulled a tattered and dirty cloth out of a drawer; this spread on the table, black-handled knives and forks were distributed round; the salt made its appearance in a saucer out of a cupboard in the wall, a large coarse pan-loaf was cut into pieces, and a platter of potatoes roasted in the ashes was carried in by the youngest boy. Cawth retired to prepare a second relay of fish, and the family began their supper.

“What’s to drink?” growled Clan, looking up inquiringly.

“It’s all gone,” replied his father, with a sigh.

Clan muttered something, then rose, and strode into the kitchen. Going over to the creel of fish he selected a couple of the largest, and despatched Cawth with these to the public-house at the corner to change them in his name for as much porter or spirits as the publican’s daughter would give.

Cawth was enjoined particularly to negotiate with the daughter of the house alone.

After a lapse of some ten minutes or so she returned with a can of porter, which she placed on the table without comment, and returned to her fish.

Lord Darraghmore looked up with rather a pleased expression in his face.

“Ha, Clan! got money, eh?”

Clan, a swarthy-faced silent young giant, vouchsafed no answer. He filled the blown-glass tumbler beside the old man’s plate, then took a deep draught out of the can.

Char stretched out his hand to take his turn, but the amiable Clanrickarde struck it aside.

“Yes, I will,” stormed the younger; “I caught the fish as well as you. Let go, I say, Clan.”

Clan, whose appetite was not yet sufficiently appeased to admit of his being in

humour to fight, growled a permission, which Char received with a short laugh of derision as he raised the can to his lips. When he had done he placed it in the centre of the board. Helena laid down the knife with which she was conveying fish to her mouth, and gave the vessel a push towards her youngest brother.

“There, Isidor!”

“Give that over here this moment, you pup,” began Clan again, stretching out an intercepting hand.

“Not I,” said Isidor, seizing the cause of contention in both his brawny hands.

A struggle ensued, in which Helena took an active part, the end of which was that the porter-can was upset, and its contents spilled as it rolled over, save a small quantity which Cawth, who, having made her appearance on the scene with a second dish of herrings, was in the nick of time to

catch, and which she appropriated without protest.

Lord Darraghmore, by whom this scene had been allowed to pass in stolid apathy, had soon finished. He rose from the table, and collecting some portions of fish on his plate, gave it down to the old wolf-dog. As he stooped his eye caught his frieze great-coat beneath the table. He pulled it out, shook, and threw it round his shoulders again.

"Boys, nobody went to the post to-day yet," said he, as he laid himself on the sofa.

"Send Cawth or Hel; I'm going to bed. The boats go out at four to-morrow morning," answered Clan.

"I won't go," snapped Hel, who was standing on a chair poking pieces of potato through the bars of a cage to a pet thrush.

"Isidor, go on you," said Char.

Isidor, a strikingly handsome young gipsy of seventeen, slight and fragile-looking as his sister, got up and went into the back room to take his cap. It was not long before he returned, evidently excited and hurried.

"A letter!" he announced, holding up to the view of all a large square envelope bordered with black.

A letter was an event of rare occurrence in the Ferrard household—that is, a real letter. Bills they had in plenty, but they were easily recognisable, and were usually thrown into the fire at once.

Hel got down off her chair and advanced to the fireplace; Char leaned over the back of the sofa, and even Clan, who was deep in Blueskin's most thrilling achievement, looked up with an unwonted expression of interest and curiosity, which

was heightened when they saw that the letter contained a cheque. Having glanced at this, Lord Darraghmore put it in his pocket, and leisurely commenced the epistle. Written in a female hand in the old Italian style, pointed and clear, it did not take him long to get to the end.

“Your aunts want you, Hel, to go and live with them in Bath. They say you have no one to take care of you, and they have sent money to get you clothes and pay your expenses.”

Lord Darraghmore said this in a weary tone, letting the letter slip down on the floor as he spoke.

“How much?” broke in Clan eagerly.

“Thirty pounds,” replied the old man negligently, taking the cheque out of his pocket as he spoke, and jerking it on the table.

“Bah !” said Clan scornfully. “Anyhow, I needn’t go fishing to-morrow.”

“Better send word to Jim Blake, then,” interposed Char, “else you’ll have Mau-riade after you next time you go down the Claddagh.”

“Cawth !” called the old man as loudly as his weak voice permitted. “Here, Cawth !”

No answer came from the inner room. Cawth was at her dinner, and evidently refused to be disturbed. Aware of her peculiarities, he waited patiently till such time as the old lady chose to make her appearance. At last, wiping her mouth with the corner of her apron, she projected her head in the door.

“Well, what are ye callin’ for now ? Can a body no eat a bit in Kirstian peace but ye must be a-rivin’ and shoutin’ the-gether gin a body was a dog ?”

“Here,” interrupted her master, point-

ing to the cheque. "Go and get me a bottle of good port wine, and fill that," jerking his almost empty pouch to her.

Cawth's grey eyes lit up as she took the cheque, on the back of which Clan had scrawled his father's name. She looked at it and nodded.

"Will I pay Kelly the grocer when I get the wine? There's seven pund owin'," she croaked; "and the bakers three, an'——"


"Get some steaks, and we'll have a supper," suggested Char; "fish is nothing for dinner."

"Will I pay, I say?" repeated Cawth, looking from one to the other. "Gin Burke knows we have thretty punds he'll be down for his bill, sure's ma life; an' he'll tell the rest o't also."

The matter required deliberation. At this hour, past eight o'clock, the banks

were long closed, consequently the cheque must be cashed at some shop ; the news of the Ferrards having money would spread, and their creditors would be down on them at once, a consummation by no means to be desired.

When the offer contained in the letter of the Honourable Miss Ferrard was made known to Cawth, she looked dubiously over it, and beckoning Clan, held a whispered consultation with him. Helena meantime sat staring into the fire bewildered. Her fate, it was plain, rested with herself ; Lord Darraghmore was incapable of even thinking seriously over the project—Hel might go or stay, whichever she pleased. Her absence could not make much difference to him ; she formed but a slight part of a life spent lying by the fireside with Wasky, the old dog. The newspapers would come regularly ; there would be wine and to-



bacco, and the boys would provide what was necessary, and in a week a quarter's rent would be due. Perry, the attorney at Darraghmore, saw to it pretty regularly ; Hel might go or stay as she liked.

She felt this herself, poor child, and perhaps she thought she would like the excitement and novelty of a change. She had been pent up now for a whole fortnight in the house ; the boys had had to go fishing, and there was no shooting, and Cawth had refused to allow her out by herself. She felt moped and spiritless for want of employment. She had read all the books, too, and wished the 1st of October was come that they might buy a new store at the book-stalls. She had a pet rabbit and a thrush, and a retriever puppy in the kitchen was nominally hers too. However, she was not allowed to handle it as she might the rabbit, for Clan, who had

bought it for ten shillings, held that it was not good for a young dog to be mauled, and had strictly enjoined on her when he made her a present of the little warm heap of black wool, that her attentions were to be confined to feeding the creature at proper times. If she ventured to take it in her lap, Cawth, who had a certain respect as well as affection for Clan, was sure to tell him, and then Hel's ears or hair were well pulled for her disobedience. Her chief pleasure was a long woodland ramble with Isidor. Daybreak often saw the two afield, Isidor's pockets filled with snares and traps, in the making of which he was an adept, Hel trudging along, her battered old hat tied down securely, her mane of black hair plaited in a tight tail, so as to keep it out of her eyes, her jacket of black wool-stuff cut and sewn by Cawth McGonigle's clumsy fingers, worn much as

her father wore his frieze great-coat, the sleeves hanging loose on her back, and the collar tied at the neck with a bit of string in lack of the defaulting button. They avoided the high-roads, preferring usually the shelter of ditch or copse for their avocations. No demesne wall was too high for the pair to scale; Isidor knew every nest, from the woodquests in the highest branches of the wood to the ground-building partridge and rail, and every hare's form within a radius of twenty miles. Sometimes their operations were carried on at a still greater distance from home; a friendly carter would give them a lift. Then night-lines were set in the trout rivers, snares in the rabbit-haunted furze, steel traps in cunningly selected places, Hel and Isidor separated to keep watch in different directions, and after nightfall—never before—the poachers would return

weary and foot-sore with the spoils, and with appetites keen from the long fast.

Sometimes it was by the sea-side their steps were turned on these occasions. The dogs accompanied them, and Isidor took care to carry his permit with him. If the wild ducks were too shy to get a shot at, there were always mussels and oysters at low tide, and whelks for bait if the elder brothers were going out with Jim Blake's boat. Jim Blake was a Claddagh man, who took them with him on condition of receiving all the fish they caught save a certain portion to be agreed on, which portion consisted generally of all the unmarketable refuse of the take.

Cawth and Clanrickarde had finished their consultation.

"Wull I pay, I say?" repeated the old woman impatiently; "if Hel wunna gae, I suppose I may as weel. These Connaught

thieves wull lave muckle siller wi' us.
What meks ye bide here noo I canna tell.
Gin I'd ma way I'd no see ane hour of
Galway."

The three young men started slightly, and looked at each other with a sudden glance, and then to the occupant of the sofa; Cawth, with a cunning oblique glance, marking the while the effect of her words.

"I'll go back to Darraghmore," said the old man dreamily.

"Darraghmore!" repeated Clan, staring at him in astonishment. "To the house, do you say?"

"We'll get lodgings in Darraghstown," said his father, speaking quietly, a sudden light sparkling in his eyes. "The house is a ruin. Yes, I'll go back, Cawth."

"Ay," assented Cawth, "I'll like that gey weel aneugh.—Weel, Hel," she added,

turning her sharp eyes on the girl, "are ye minded to go to yer lady aunts, or no?"

Hel had heard not one word of what had just been said; she had been staring vacantly into the fire, picturing Bath and her life there. Would she have a coach, and ride dressed in velvets and fur like the sheriff's lady the day Isidor and she had seen her? She had been in England before, long ago. The family had migrated to Liverpool, but the life there had been little to their taste, so they had turned back again. She had forgotten it all long ago.

She looked up quickly, startled back into consciousness of the scene around her by Cawth's question.

"Yes," she said abruptly; "I'll go to them."

"Guid," chuckled Cawth; "ye can keep

that, then, my lord, an' I'll manish for what ye want."

She returned him the cheque as she spoke, and went out; not a word was said by the party. Clan resumed his book; Char was splicing a broken joint of his fishing-rod; Isidor drew his seat in front of the fire, and remained staring now into the red mass of peats, and again with a strange bewildered pucker of his brows at his sister; the old man broke open the cover of his paper, and having drawn the candlestick near to him, was speedily absorbed in its contents.

However Cawth had contrived its acquisition, she brought back with her a bottle of port wine. Lord Darraghmore looked up with something of eagerness in his face as she re-entered the room.

"Dinna be feared," she muttered, "I haena shaken it."

She proceeded then to uncork the bottle, his eyes following every movement jealously. She found a decanter, the stopper of which had been replaced by an ordinary cork, decanted the wine carefully, and poured him out a half tumbler, then she placed the decanter on the chimney-piece, where he could keep his eyes on it, and went into her own sanctum.

After a while the door was gently opened, and she called to Helena softly.

The girl rose and went into the kitchen. Cawth was going to have tea; her little black teapot sat in a nest of warm turf ashes on the hearth, and she desired, in token of unwonted good humour, to share it with her young mistress. The family, as a rule, rarely enjoyed that luxury. At such times as they had money, beer, spirits, and wine were freely consumed, and when these supplies were stopped tea also was

unattainable. Helena liked tea, so she seated herself a little less abruptly than was her wont on a kish or wicker basket, which, turned bottom up, did duty for a seat at one side of the fire. She took the cup and saucer and the thick slice of bread and butter from her nurse's hand, and ate and drank in silence.

One tallow candle stuck in a bottle illumined the apartment. The dogs lay in corners as near the fire as they could prudently compass, having an eye to the ever-ready toes of Cawth's brogues. Over near the window Helena could see her white rabbit sitting on its hind-legs, and staring with round pink eyes through the bars of its box. She remembered suddenly that it had not been fed since breakfast, and laying aside the tea, jumped up to look for a cold potato.

“Cawth, have you any cabbage-leaves?”

she asked, noticing that the little hungry thing snuffed dubiously at the proffered edible.

"An' iv I had," was the gracious reply, "I dinna fetch kail and pay for it oot o' my ain hard earnings to feed yon fashious brutes. Kail, indeed! Hech! there'll be a clane sweep of them a' dirackly."

"Will there?" Helena repeated absently, seating herself again on the kish and stretching out her boots on the warm stone.

"Ye'll be needin' new boots, Hel, I'm thinkin'," began Cawth, surveying the coarse brogues that disfigured Helena's feet, "for yer trip to Bath, an' some bits o' claes. I'll have a job I'se warran ye, riggin' ye oot, an' the flittin' too."

"When are we going?" asked Helena indifferently enough, for she scarcely expected an answer to her question.

Cawth was not addicted to explanations or idle talk. Once a migration was definitely arranged, and, as we see, the family needed but the slightest impetus to set it in motion, Cawth settled all the rest. They had no furniture. The tables, of the commonest deal, were bought or hired; the chairs were the same, and, if needed, Clan or Char could knock a chair into shape out of a board or two in a few minutes; a kettle, two large pots, a gridiron, and a pan formed Cawth's *batterie de cuisine*; a cabin, in short, was as well munitioned as the one living room and kitchen of the Ferrards. A settle bed in the corner of the kitchen was Helena's, Cawth had a mattress near the fire, Lord Darraghmore had a bedroom upstairs, which he shared with two of his sons, and Clan lay on the sofa with the wolf-dog.

"Not till ye're gone," answered Cawth,

after a long pause. "To-morrow, first thing, we'll buy ye what's needful, an' I maun tak' ye to Cork. Ma sister's livin' in Cork; she'll happen gie's night roomin' till I ken aboot the packet to Bristol. Bristol to Bath's no a lang way."

"Cawth," asked Helena, fixing her great eyes questioningly on the old woman's face, "did you ever see my aunts?"

"Ay, at Darraghmore, when I was a lass like ye. There was Miss Elizabeth, a tall, braw dame, very proud; and Alice, she was gey handsome; then there was Helena—ye're named for her—she's deid."

"Well, I know that," said Hel impatiently; "but what sort were they, Cawth?"

"Augh! can I mind sae lang? The people at the old place had tales o' them after they went back to London. They

couldna stan' the gait o' Darraghmore at a'. Ye see, they were aye in England, and had English wy'es wi' them."

Of English "wy'es" Helena Ferrard had little conception, but the saying fell with some sort of foreboding on her ears. She put down the teacup and folded her hands in her lap, and pondered what might be the differences between the ways of Bath and theirs. She had some notion of a different style of living gathered chiefly from her books, and she pictured to herself surroundings of velvet—which it may be doubted if she would recognise on seeing—silk, lace, and mirrors; the last a questionable boon, considering the figure of herself with which any she had encountered presented her—scowling, overhanging brows, tangled hair, and a yellow skin. Helena was painfully conscious of her own deficiencies as contrasted with the elegant

ladies of her penny-awful romances. She turned almost angrily from their trailing robes and furbelows to the chaste simplicity of the Indian heroines of the backwoods.

She felt far more akin with them, and almost emulated their accomplishments. Char and Isidor's praises of her tying flies, devising new knots for snares, and trapping birds sounded sweeter than ever in her ears. She longed and begged to be allowed to use Isidor's gun, but he, prompted by an idea that he owed it to himself, as a man, to preserve at least one branch intact from her intrusion, refused steadfastly. Helena submitted, but it was with a lively sense of injury. Neither would the lads allow her to accompany them in the boats of the Claddagh, and as they had done nothing else but fish for the last fortnight, the expenses of Lady Darraghmore's interment having caused the funds

to disappear sooner than was usual, Helena had had a dull time of it. She had read and re-read until she was tired of all her books, and now, out of pure weariness of spirit, longed for a change.

Cawth was the first to break the silence. She finished her third cup of tea, replaced the black teapot in its corner with the cups and saucers, and then resumed her place at the fire.

"I kent weel aneugh there was a flittin' to be!"

Helena, who guessed from the voice what was coming, shuddered involuntarily. Cawth noted the shudder, and continued in a deliberate tone with a pleased sense of power and importance.

"I dreamed last night of a hole in ma shoe: it's a seer sign—just as seer's the knock on the door at midnight comes to the Ferrards before a deeth."

Helena clenched her teeth tight in a perfect spasm of endurance.

“Ye mind, I heerd it afore she died, I tellt ye, Hel.”

Heedless of the nod which Helena speedily accorded, in the vain hope of stemming the flood of unwelcome reminiscence, Cawth pursued :

“ I kent it weel, indeed. It was just twelve o’clock, and I wasna able to sleep for the win’. Deed, Hel, I’m no seer it was the win’ skrieked that night. I am not seer—no, no ; I’ve heard them skrieks afore. An’ it was just struck when I heard the knock—wan clear loud knock—it rung through ma heid. Well, I thocht it might be Clan back from the fishing—ye min’ he was out with Blake a’ day—an’ I up and doon the stair—he’s an ill lad to keep waitin’ is Clan ; and I opened the dure, and somethin’ struck sae cold and

harsh a' through me ; there was nae one in a' the street—not one. I waited, and leuked, and waited—no a soul could I see. It was the same, but ye're too young to min' it, when yer aunt Helena, Mrs. Lamont that was, died ; ay, an' Walter—poor Walter, that was a bonny lad.”

“Cawth,” said Helena, trying vainly to speak with a steady voice, “how was it Walter was killed ?”

“Killed by a man named Thornhill ; it was an accident, out duck-shooting in the bog. Some say Thornhill's sister—there was something in't about her. Augh ! it's ower long ago noo. But I mind well the knocks came to the big door of Darraghmore for Walter ; ay, an' he heard them an' went down an' opened the door himself—think of that, noo.”

"Cawth, did he — did he see anything?"

"I canna tell," answered Cawth in a mysterious tone. "He wouldna answer if he did or no; but just ae week after that he was carried in a' wat, and wi' the red stuff o' the bog on his claes an' his bonny dark face; I washed it all off mysel'. He was the finest man of a' the Ferrards, an' a gey bad ane was Walt."

"Ye'll go to Darraghmore then, soon?"

"I'll see ye off first—afore a' the siller's gone. That will na be long gin the lads gets their will wi't. Get to bed wi' ye, Hel; there's a gude day's work before ye the morn."

Just then the door opened, and Isidor lounged in. He came over and stood on the hearth, and fidgeted about in a purposeless way for a minute or two. At last he spoke.

"Will ye take the rabbit with ye?" addressing Helena.

"No," she replied, looking over at it wistfully, and then up at him.

"I'll feed it for ye," said he, after a sort of awkward pause.

"All right," assented Hel thankfully. She puzzled for a minute, and then said quickly: "Isi, if you want any snares or things fixed, you know, I'll do them in the morning. You can leave the gut and line in the old desk before you go out."

Isi looked at her and nodded. He stood by the fire, shifting from one foot to the other uneasily, his hands buried deep in his pockets, and his dark eyebrows nearly meeting in a pucker over his nose. Then he went slowly back to the other room; he could not have said anything more had his life depended on it, nor

Helena either, yet her eyes followed his retreating figure with something almost of pain in their look, until the door closed upon it.



CHAPTER III.



HE next day was spent packing up the family property. The boys all disappeared early ; Clan took charge of the fishing gear and the guns, all of which he managed to bestow on board a steamer bound southwards. He could land at some convenient port and get across country to Darraghmore by train or other conveyance. As to wardrobe, they were not likely to be impeded in their flight by any considera-

tions for its safety. Not one of them possessed a second suit of clothes. The only difference observable in Lord Darraghmore's out-of-door costume was that he put his arms through the sleeves of the great-coat which in the house he wore cloak-wise, fastened round his neck ; an old red silk handkerchief twisted about his throat, and a black hat, dirty and crushed, completed his attire.

Cawth took charge of the money. She gave Clan two pounds for his expenses, Char and Isidor one each, his lordship five; the rest she knotted in a handkerchief and concealed in her dress. She bought Helena a pair of boots, the cheapest she could find ; a black cloth coat, a ready-made black skirt and under-jacket were soon found, common and ugly, but still decent. Then she got a crape collar and cuffs, and a pair of black cloth gloves, clumsy and

enormously too large. A few toilet requisites of the cheapest and commonest kind, such as a servant might provide for herself, were next procured, and then Helena was pronounced to be ready for her journey.

“Ye must hev’ a new hat too, Hel; that winna do at all,” said she, looking critically at the battered, shapeless thing beneath the shadow of which Helena’s great eyes stared with brilliancy. “Come away down here—here’s a milliner’s shop.”

In the window of a shop in one of the smaller streets—Eyre Square and its fashionable milliners Cawth studiously avoided—they saw hanging a collection of such bonnets as delight the eyes of the farmers’ girls and those servants who are daring enough to defy custom and criticism by casting off the decent cap or hood, which in some remote districts of the country

still survives, a lingering remnant of class costume. Helena cast a doubtful eye on the hideous finery as they entered.

“Cawth ! it must be black, you know,” she whispered.

The shopman produced his stock of black hats, some half-dozen little hard round felt saucers and conical jars.

Hel looked at them in bewilderment.

“Quite the fashion—the last thing from London—if you’d try one on, miss.”

Hel removed her black headpiece, and took the largest of the black cones in her hand, surveying it doubtfully all the time. She put it on her head ; at least six inches too small in circumference. The hard unyielding thing slipped of rebelliously.

“Try this one, miss. This is worn in the new style, on the back of the head—allow me, miss.”

The shopman had taken one of the saucers, and tried to fix it on the back of Helena's head, with somewhat better success. Not that it fitted, but there happened fortunately to be a sort of excrescence of hair where her thick plait commenced, on which the little hat could and did hang.

"Now, miss!" said he, quite triumphant.

Hel looked all round.

"Why it feels just like nothing at all. I won't wear that thing, I might as well have no hat on at all."

"It's the fashion, miss, I assure you; there's nothing else worn. You won't get anything different, indeed."

"Ye must take it, I'm thinkin', Hel," said Cawth, who was tolerably indifferent, so long as Hel had a hat of any denomination or appearance, whether she liked it or

it became her. She rose as if to close the affair.

Hel flashed a look of scorn and anger at both, jerked the little black saucer from her head to the counter, on which it bumped as if it were of wood too, and picking up her own hat flung out of the shop. Cawth followed storming.

“Up that way in Eyre Square, I saw large comfortable-looking hats hanging in a window; let’s go there,” said the young lady in a determined tone, setting out rapidly in the direction she indicated.

Vainly did Cawth insist and try to stop her. Helena’s mouth was set in a way that was not to be mistaken.

“I’ll have a hat that will keep the light out of my eyes like that, or I’ll have none. Do you hear me, now?”

There was no help for it, Cawth unwillingly followed the imperious damsel. They

crossed the square and found themselves before the door of the fashionable milliner of Galway.


“There now,” said Helena, triumphantly pointing to a black Rubens hat in the showcase. “Did not I say it? I’ll have that hat.”

Cawth snorted with rage, and pronounced the hat to be a “muckle pot-lid.” But Helena turned a deaf ear, and they went upstairs and found themselves in a show-room filled with the ordinary belongings of such places; a couple of handsomely dressed ladies monopolised the attention of the milliner and her assistants. Boxes of gay-coloured flowers lay strewn about, feathers of all shades and descriptions; a whole case of ornaments composed of little tropical birds was on a chair near Helena. A great full-length mirror was at one end of the room; she could see herself reflected in

it from head to foot. Dresses were displayed on stands, the magnificence of which fell upon her like a new revelation. Presently her eye caught a humming-bird impaled on the spike of a brown and streaked tiger-lily; she uttered an inarticulate cry of admiration and plucked Cawth's sleeve.

The people in the shop, who had not observed their entry, turned round. Cawth looked like a peasant woman, only that her white cap was covered by a bonnet of rusty velvet and antiquated shape that had been Lady Darraghmore's. Helena's coarse frieze skirt and coat seemed to indicate the same class, but her hat and the long crape veil was also a contradiction. A girl stepped forward in obedience to a sign from her mistress.

"What d'you wawnt," she asked, speaking affectedly, and not without some trace of contempt in her tone.



Helena replied laconically, "That hat," nodding towards the window as she spoke.

The tone was not that of a common person, whatever the dress might be, so the girl civilly desired them to wait a moment, and returned to her task. Cawth frowned at Helena and stepped well forward to the group.

"Ye'll have the goodness," she began in a high-pitched peremptory tone, "to attend to the Honourable Miss Ferrard at once—we hae nae time to lose wi' ye."

The strange voice (the vulgar tones contrasting oddly with the almost insolent peremptoriness of the command) fell like a bomb among the group. The ladies, unwilling to be rude, turned—one so as to face the great mirror, the other so that she could glance obliquely through the stands of finery; they looked questioningly at each other. The milliner, however, who

knew everybody and everything, after the manner of her kind, whispered something round the rim of a velvet hat she was displaying at the moment, at which her customers smiled broadly. She desired her assistant to attend to the odd-looking couple however, so Cawth's pride was gratified for the nonce.

Presently the ladies swept out, a rich odour of sealskin and the best eau de cologne saluting Hel's nostrils as they passed. They bestowed a pitying half-contemptuous glance on her, which she repaid with a frown that made her brows look like one continuous line.

"A large hat," she said, irritably pushing aside a composition of crape and feather flowers presented to her view. "I won't have feathers or flowers, I want nothing but just a hat."

She spoke in a loud authoritative voice.

What business had these women to be staring at her and Cawth? They were going to be paid. Yes, she would see that unaccustomed ceremony gone through before she left the shop. Cawth, who indeed at that moment was revolving in the depths of her practised brain a scheme to get the hat out of the shop without the preliminary, and to her view unnecessary formality of paying the bill, might say or swear as she liked.

"Felt or straw, miss?" said the attendant respectfully.

"Show some," said Hel shortly; she was puzzled, but resolved not to commit herself.

"Perhaps the young lady would like a Rubens, or a Vandyke, or maybe the new garden shape, or the Elvire?" and another assistant, an older and sharper dame, looked over the lid of a box she was busy at.

The young lady, who did not want for

presence of mind—perhaps it was that obtuseness which betimes answers equally well—stared at her stonily. Cawth, with a grunt of impatience, retired to a chair by the door to mature her scheme.


“The Vandyke, miss,” said the shop-girl, showing her a hat turned up at one side with a handsome curling plume.

Helena, without vouchsafing a glance at it, fixed her eyes on the bearer with an ominous frown.

“You heard me, I think,” said she, slowly and distinctly; “a large hat without feathers or flowers.”

“Untrimmed hats,” said the mistress sharply. “Be quick, now, Miss Kelly; here’s Mrs. Blood coming across the square, and the Miss Persses.”

In a moment a number of large felt hats were placed before Helena. She selected a high-crowned cavalier hat with



a broad brim fastened up at one side, which fitted down comfortably on her head. Then unpinning her crape veil, she tried to fasten it on the new purchase.

“Allow me, miss,” said the attendant; and taking the veil from her customer’s clumsy fingers, she fastened it in a becoming wreath round the hat, and then put it on her head. “Very becoming to you, miss,” said she, “very. Like to look at it?” and she handed a toilet mirror.

But Helena turned her back brusquely.

“Cawth,” she cried imperiously, “come here. “Pay for this; do you hear? You have the money with you.”

Cawth ground her teeth. There was no help for it, however, so she produced the fragment of an old apron which held her money, and untying with fingers that trembled with rage the complicated knots that fastened up her store, counted out the

twelve shillings demanded by the milliner, then followed Helena, who had stalked out of the room majestically.

“Ma word!” she exploded, once in the street, “but ye’re the gran’ leddy, Miss Ferrard! Twal shillin’ for a bit bare hat, an’ ‘Cawth, pay for this; div ye hear?’” and she gave a ludicrous imitation of her young mistress’s tones of command; then, catching sight of Hel’s impassive countenance, with a sudden lapse from mimicry to venom, “Just wait till I see Clan the night; he’ll rug yer ears, ye cutty. Gae way doon the street an’ in straight t’ hoose; pit turf o’ the fire, an’ wait till I come.”

Thus speaking, she gave Helena a push as they reached the corner of their own street, and they parted company. Cawth plunged down a filthy lane under an archway, so low that only one person at a time

could stand erect beneath it, to find a dealer in second-hand furniture from whom she had bought the plenishing of their rooms, and with whom she was now to drive a nefarious bargain, to the despoliation of the family's creditors.

Cawth, having exacted the uttermost penny, arranged that he was to come late at night with a cart and remove the tables, chairs, and beds; a candle was to be lighted and left burning by the last person—usually herself—to quit the house, and the key might be left in the door. The night mail—the last train to quit Galway—would take them all off that night. Cawth had indeed intended at first to take Hel to Cork and ship her by the Bristol packet before undertaking the troubles and perils of “fitting.” But reflection had convinced her that the old lord was now too feeble, mentally and physically, to be left with

safety, so she changed her programme, and decided that her master and Hel and herself were to travel together as far as they could south. As for the boys, Clan had gone before daybreak ; the dogs, with Char, had found shelter in Jim Blake's hut on the Claddagh, to follow at their leisure, and Isidor was to accompany them to Mallow, and thence go on with his father to Darraghstown to the hotel where Clan had already ordered rooms.

They had not seen Isidor since breakfast, and Cawth vowed vengeance on him for not being in readiness to assist in the disposition of her boxes and bundles. She also felt anxious lest he, not being aware of her sudden plans, should fail to appear in time. She hired a cart to take the luggage on to Oranmore, a station beyond Galway, where they were to meet the midnight train. The goods despatched, Cawth

prepared dinner, and having eaten it, the family lay down for a few hours' rest. At eleven o'clock Cawth rose, woke his lordship and Helena, and sent them up to the station. Helena was cautioned to wear her veil close over her face, and to avoid the crowd. They took third-class tickets of course, and as at that late hour few were at the station save travellers and persons on business, they hoped to escape unobserved.

At the last moment, when Cawth was lighting the candle which was to serve the double purpose of blinding such neighbours as might entertain suspicions of the unwonted stir and movements, and also as a signal to the broker who was to come in and carry off the furniture, in bounced Isidor with a string of fish. His noisy outburst was checked by Cawth, and speedily comprehending her, he flung the string of

fish on the floor and made off to the station. Here he found Hel and his father, both shivering in a far corner of the third-class waiting-room. About one minute before the bell rang Cawth made her appearance, the hood of her huge blue cloak pulled over her head. They took their places, and after a few minutes' delay the mail-train started. At Oranmore the boxes were ready. Cawth jumped out and saw to their safe bestowal. After that until they reached Athenry Junction, where they had to wait for a train to take them across King's County to Portarlinton, not a word was exchanged between the travellers. They reached Mallow about midday the next day, after a journey through a bleak region of stubble fields and bog, where they were to part company. The Cork train was soon ready, and Cawth, selecting Helena's bundle and

black bag from a miscellaneous heap under their seats, got down. Hel stood up and prepared to get out. Lord Darraghmore was lying at full length on the opposite seat. His nose was all that was to be seen in the space between his hat and the red silk muffler which hid the lower portion of his face. She did not know whether he was asleep or not, so touched his hand timidly.

He opened his eyes with a start.

"Where are we? Mallow? Oh yes, Mallow Junction. I must get up and look out. And, damn me, I say, where's the flask, Cawth?" he called peevishly.

"Come on, Hel, I say; will ye lose the train?" snapped Cawth without on the platform. There was plenty of time, but she was cold and tired, and this was her way of showing her discontent.

"Good-bye, papa," said Hel awkwardly.

"You know I'm going to Bath—to my aunts"—she repeated, seeing a puzzled look in his eyes.

"Oh yes; good-bye, then, Hel. Be a good little girl, eh? And," he added, with a glimpse of his old grand manner, for Lord Darraghmore had been a gentleman once, "my love to my sisters."

Helena got out and made her way with difficulty, for she was tired and stiff, after Cawth across the platform. Isidor, who had plunged out head-foremost instantly the train had stopped, made his appearance at the door of the Cork train. He leaned one hand on it after they had taken their places, and seemed trying to say something.

"Hel," said he at last, with a suffused look in his great eyes, "the rabbit's under the seat. Jim Blake carried it up to Oranmore with the things."

"Gin I'd known he'd sic lumber in his cairt," interrupted Cawth, "I'd ha' flung it in the street, or gien it to Rusty to ait."

Hel never noticed this interpolation, and only looked her thanks darkly from beneath her cavalier hat.

A premonitory whistle from the engine warned them the time was come to part. But Isidor did not take his dirty hand off the door yet.

"Isi," whispered Helena, leaning forward so that her chin touched the ledge of the window, "I did all the gut into snares, and there's slip-knots in the cashroom cord, too, in the old desk; it's in Cawth's big box."

The train was in motion now. Isidor stepped along beside it, his eyes fixed wistfully on her.

"Good-bye," said he thickly; "in the big desk. I'll feed him for ye."

Then he dug his hands into his pockets and walked back to his father, wondering to himself how many snares there were, and of what sizes Hel had made them, and when would it be Cawth's convenience that he should get at the desk which was in her big box? He stood by the door, watching with somewhat dim eyes and with a deeper indentation than usual over his nose, the Cork train, as it steamed onwards, till the last vestige of smoke had disappeared behind the hills.

Lord Darraghmore roused him presently from his reverie, by giving him his flask, with directions to have it filled with the best brandy to be had at the refreshment counter, expressing at the same time a hope that Clan had not neglected to bespeak a good dinner at the Darraghmore Arms while he was about ordering rooms. Then he lifted his feet on the wooden

bench, wrapped himself as warmly as possible, and settled into a doze. Isidor opened the window at the other end of their compartment, and, crossing his arms on the top of the door, rested his head on them, and stared out at the wilderness of bog and moor that stretched away westwards to the mountains.



CHAPTER IV.

“Thy dark eyes opened not,
Nor first revealed themselves to English air;
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.”



ELENA and her attendant reached Cork late in the afternoon ; both were tired, and Cawth gave full vent to her weariness and bad temper in a series of scoldings and revilings.

“The Ferrards were a pack of fules ;

shiftless, bootless crew ; t' workhouse was t' proper place for 'em all, beggars and scant o' grace lot. An' Cawth would see them there yet. As for Hel, black nowt, her fine aunts wad soon rid the hoose ov her. Hech—she'd live to see it."


Here she was taken by a fit of asthmatic coughing, brought on by the jolting of the old covered car she had hired—for when in cash she had all her compatriots' aversion to walking—to take them to Cawth's sister's house, situated in a back street near the butter-market.

Helena heard nothing, or was as if she heard nothing ; she and Cawth sat on one side of the "jingle," her parcels occupied the opposite seat. Helena was next the door, and was busy watching the crowds of Patrick Street, and the gay, well-lit shops they passed by. She had eaten scarce anything since the previous night, and felt

rather giddy and weak ; she was anxious, too, in spite of herself, and dreaded the unknown future that lay across the sea. She pondered Cawth's words. "Miss Elizabeth, a braw dame and prood," and those mysterious "English ways." How she wondered what they could be.

At last, after some searching and inquiry, they drew up at a house, the lower part of which was occupied by a little shop. Cawth got down first, bidding Helena remain until she came out again. After a quarter of an hour's delay she presented herself, accompanied by an old woman, somewhat stouter, but in other respects the counterpart of herself. She curtsied to Helena, and, collecting her scanty luggage, bid her walk in.

They passed through the little shop, reeking horribly of salt-fish, stale vegetables, and tobacco, and passed into a



queer little sitting-room behind it. Cawth put down the bundles in a corner, and telling Helena to wait for her, went out. There was a turf fire in the grate, and the girl was glad to sit down and warm herself, for the evening was chilly. So she pulled an old rickety arm-chair close to the grate and seated herself.

There was nothing to be seen from the little window ; it was choked with plants, straggling, unhealthy-looking geraniums with pale, waxy leaves ; over the chimney-piece hung a picture of Emmet as he stood addressing his judge, his arms folded, and, but for the attitude, not unlike the common representative of Napoleon. Jennies and Jessamies in gaudy crockeryware decked the chimney-piece, and a dirty white cat sat on a straw stool before the hearth. The place was dirty and frowzy, and the air intolerably bad ; but it was warm, and

Helena, as we may imagine, was not disposed to be too critical. She took off her hat and laid it on the table ; then, leaning her tired and aching head on the rail of her chair, in that uneasy attitude fell asleep.

She was roused after an hour or so by Cawth, who came in bringing some provisions in a basket. She fetched a kettle full of water from the street pump and cooked steaks for supper, in which meal they were joined by the old woman of the shop.

Helena drank her tea eagerly. She was too weary to take part in the conversation, though she heard it all drowsily.

“ An’ so they’re back to Darraghstown ? dear me,” said the old woman, “ an’ yon lass is to go to England the morn. Did ye speer the time o’ the boat, Cawth ? ”

She spoke like Cawth, with the real

northern accent. Thirty years of absence had in no way dulled its edge, grating and sharp as the day they had quitted their native village.

“Ay!” replied Cawth; “an’ I’m away now to find Jim O’Brien; he’s going over wi’ pegs, an’ he can look to her too. She’s no just that steady that I can lat her gae alane.”

And Cawth’s malignant grey eyes looked over to see how this shot told. Hel had heard nothing, she was fast falling asleep again. The warmth and closeness of the little room, added to fatigue, acted upon her almost like a sleeping-draught. Her head was sinking on her breast, and her long eyelashes almost touched her cheek. She looked beautiful, notwithstanding that she was weary and travel-stained; a faint red flush coloured her cheeks, and the neglected tangled hair had fallen back,

leaving her fine brows uncovered in their marble beauty.

“She’s some like the others, I wat,” said Cawth’s sister, setting down her saucer and looking across to where the girl sat ; “none so good-lookin’ as Elizabeth. She’s ower tawny for that.”

“Tawny,” repeated Cawth ; “an’ a rale Ferrard, black and dour ; gin ye raised her she’d think little o’ stickin’ ye wi’ a knife—my word for it she would.”

The other grinned approvingly.

“Is Clanrickarde, what ca’ ye the biggest ane, wi’ the auld lord yet ?”


“Ay,” replied Cawth, “he sune winna be though ;” and she nodded mysteriously. “He be after Claude to Austria, I’m thinkin’, an’ jest as guid ; we haena enough for oorselves, let alane keepin’ yon great fool. He’s better off ; ma word, I dinna ken the minute we’d hae the police

doon on us, thievin' an' poachin' an' robbin' fra ane end o' the week to the other. He was in wi' a gang that hed a still in Galway, an' when it was taen by the polis' Clan had a run like a deer, and hide for three days. I haena peace o' my life."

"Be here!" ejaculated the listener, piously.

From Clan to Char, from Char to Isidor, Hel and Lord Darraghmore, Cawth dealt impartial justice all round. The very schemes she herself had hatched and suggested she now unfolded to her willing auditor, painting them in their blackest colours, reviling and ridiculing those whose bread she ate with a bitterness and venom that would have astonished Helena herself could she have heard her. Every wild prank or ill deed was dilated upon by this faithful follower, who, indeed, was but refreshing her memory ere she should

commence the "pastures new" awaiting her among the Darraghmore gossips, though with them she would exercise a certain discretion. Cawth knew what to tell and what to keep. She would spread tales of Clan's vices and follies, but she would stoutly deny that the larder was supplied with hares and rabbits from the demesne; that it was her interest to hide, and she had a keen eye to her own interest. She would recount with painful exactitude the oaths of Char and Isidor, but she would omit the depredations with snares and traps that the youths committed in the coverts and preserves. Cawth had saved money. Although she had no wages she had the disbursements of such part of the family revenue as was devoted to paying bills and the household outlay generally. And she was too wise in her generation not to take care of herself; and



notwithstanding all this she loved the Ferrards, and grudged no exertion or labour in their behalf.

“She’s going to the aunts—the lord’s sisters, dear ! They canna be young noo,” said the old woman thoughtfully.

“Ay, we’re well rid o’ Hel,” was the nurse’s reply, casting at the same time a glance of mingled affection and bitterness at her now sleeping charge. “Wad ye believe me, Meg, she canna mair than read a bit, an’ she’ll be sixteen in a month — a muckle guid-for-naethin’ thing, an’ ignorant as a kish o’ brogues.”

Cawth and her sister remained till the tallow candle which illumined their little den was nearly burnt out. Poor Helena, whose childlike beauty formed a striking contrast to their weird hag-like faces, still slept heavily. Then Cawth remembered that her task to inquire about the boat and

the escort for her charge was yet undone. So reluctantly she had to forego discoursing on her congenial theme, and pulling her great blue cloak around her, set out for the shipping office.



CHAPTER V.



EXT morning at four o'clock in a cold grey twilight, Helena and Cawth were standing on the quay by the packet-boat watching the embarkment of some hundred shrieking pigs, who were to form her travelling companions to Bristol. The last firkin of butter and the last unwilling porker had been consigned to their respective places when a burly, frieze-coated man, with a red wholesome-looking countenance

set in a framing of yellow beard, approached them and shouted to Cawth.

“Mornin’; now, ma’am, where’s your consignment? time we were getting aboard.”

“Mornin’, Mr. O’Brien,” replied Cawth with dignity; “ye’ll mind Lord Darraghmore? this is his youngest leddy, an’ I’m pittin’ her in yer charge so far’s Bristol.”

Hel looked up into the cattle-driver’s great face, half curiously, half timidly; the big man stepped back and raised, with an almost irresistible gesture of respect, his old felt caubeen, showing a broad white forehead above the red-and-tan of his face and a mass of curly hair.

“Sarvice, miss; I’ll be proud to be ony assistance to ye.”

A bell rang on board, and the order to clear the ship of shore-folk could be heard. Cawth looked at Helena one moment; a

strange grimace contorted her weather-beaten cunning old face, and something of a softened look shone in her eyes as she looked at her last nursling child on her way alone and unfriended across the sea. She hesitated one moment, then dipping her hand suddenly into her pocket, by an alert flank movement placed herself between the drover and her charge.

“Hel,” she whispered eagerly, “gie me yer handkerchief; quick!”

She snatched the handkerchief which the girl held out wonderingly, and knotted two gold coins in it, fastening them in a tight snarl with the aid of her teeth.

“Now, miss, by yer leave; ’tis time we was off.”

“Guid-bye to ye, lassie; mind that now, and sae lang’s ye hae it ye dinna want a friend.”

Hel stooped and kissed the withered

cheek, then turned, and keeping close behind her escort, crossed the narrow gangway and gained the slippery dirty deck of the Bristol boat. It presented a noisy scene in the chill grey of the last morning of September. The live stock squeaked hideously, big pigs, little pigs, black, white, grey, and red, all bemoaned their fate in various keys. Huge piles of butter-firkins, hogsheads of whiskey, sacks and bales, lay promiscuously everywhere around. The captain was shouting his orders from the deck, and the crew seemed to be in their own way and everybody else's. The big hawsers were cast off and fell with a splash into the river; the paddles turned forward a couple of strokes, then back as many; gradually her head pointed outward, half a dozen quick strokes and there lay a great gulf of seething foam-flecked water between them and the shore.

She walked down to the end of the deck and mounted on a bale to look over the bulwark. The quay behind them was fast receding, and she could see Cawth in her black bonnet and great cloak leisurely walking away. Helena pulled her hat down tight, and stood watching the white terraces on the shores of the Lee glide by ; gradually the river widened, the banks rose higher, and the lovely sylvan scenes of Passage lay abreast of them. The trees were putting on their autumn hues, and to Helena's eyes, accustomed to the wild wastes and stone walls of Galway, the masses of exquisite foliage almost realised in their brilliant and varied colouring her most cherished visions of fairyland.

Down to the very edge of the water, whose ripples kissed their overhanging branches, grew the arbutus, mingled with alders, silver larch, and willows. Helena

looked longingly at the shadowy aisles between, and thought how delightful a covert she could make in such a place with Isidor; he, bare-legged, with spear or snare stepping noiselessly among the shiny pebbles, while she, on book intent, or more often keeping watchful guard against surprise, paced up and down the banks.

A harsh cry roused her from her dream; she looked up and saw a couple of gulls flying in their wake, near enough for her to hear the heavy strong beat of their pinions, and see their hard wolfish eyes. She had a piece of bread with her, and breaking it flung it out to them. They pounced upon it and seized it almost as it reached the water, then rose mid-air again, swaying to and fro with almost the same undulating motion as if floating on the water. Every now and then their shrill cry reached her ears.

She went down to breakfast, summoned by the big drover, who placed her beside himself, and loaded her plate with food in kindly token of his goodwill. Helena thanked him with a look, and eat her breakfast with the keen relish of a growing girl. Meanwhile he, feeling bound to do his best, thought he ought to make some conversation, and plied his charge with rough point-blank questions.

How far might she be going? and where? and to whom? and the like.

It was all meant with the best intention, but he was speedily compelled to give it up and attack his breakfast discomfited.

Helena had soon finished, and began to wonder how she might edge her way out of the narrow bench, in which she was hemmed on one side by her burly cavalier, and on the other by an equally burly

priest, both of whom were absorbed in the business of eating.

Presently the drover leaned back and laid down the saucer from which he had been imbibing tea with a noise not unlike that of one of his own four-footed belongings in the forecastle when engaged at a troughful of buttermilk. He cast a side-look at Helena, whose dark eyes were travelling round the table in perplexity, then leaned back, and past his next neighbour, till he reached the ear of a man seated farther up, to whom he whispered, audibly enough to be heard by Helena as well :

“The young lady here beside me, ye seen her come aboard, Smith ; whisht, she’s a lord’s daughter, ay fait.”

Smith, an English jobber, instantly leaned as far forward as he could to stare open-mouthed at the subject of his friend’s

remark. He did not enjoy the vision of nobility long. Helena had heard ; she stood up, and turning round with difficulty got her foot on the bench ; a light spring landed her on the floor, and heedless of the general murmur and the stare that greeted this feat, she was out in a moment and away back to her post in the stern.

The sun had broken through the clouds by this, and gilded the white houses among the trees and the distant Waterford mountains lying in purple and grey to the east. A salt smell was in the air, and the breeze became stronger as they neared the ocean. Helena shrunk herself close in her jacket, a wretched rag of thin cloth. She had neither rug nor shawl, and wondered, in case it was possible for her to go down to the cabin again, whether the bad smell or the cold was the most endurable evil. She decided on remaining where she was,

and leaning against the taffrail, looked about her with wondering eyes. As they were passing Roche's Point her guardian presented himself on deck and looked all around for his charge; catching sight of her where she was perched on a heap of merchandise, he steered his way towards her somewhat unsteadily, for the big Atlantic rollers were sweeping up now, and the boat's motion was rather uncertain.

"Look out beyant, miss, an' you'll see a big steamer; that's an American."

Helena's eyes obeyed the direction of his finger, and she could see a huge black vessel steaming towards the harbour they had quitted.

"Arn't you cold, miss?" asked the drover, replacing his little black pipe in his mouth, and scanning Helena's wan cheeks and pinched blue lips.

“N—no,” she answered untruthfully.

He disappeared, and returned with a rug which, from its appearance and smell, must have done duty as a horse-cloth in its day ; and unable conveniently to wrap it round her, the good-natured fellow opened it, and handed it to her by the two corners. She drew it round her shoulders gratefully enough, and thanked him with a smile that lighted up her face. He sauntered off to join his friend the English drover, who was seated near the funnel.

“ My heye !” this gentleman began, “ so that’s the ’Onourable Miss Ferrard, a lord’s daughter—come now, raily, Jim.”

Jim, whose black pipe was in process of being replenished, could spare no breath for further asseveration than that conveyed by a solemn nod. Presently, when the little

cube of tobacco was in full blast, he began :

“That she is so, Smith—a rale article too; none o’ yer new musharoon English lot, but a ginuine owld stock entirely. They’ve broke through, broke hosse and foot.”

“Broke! I rayther expect it, Jim; if hever I seen a lord’s daughter a-travellin’ that way! why look at ’er cloes.”

“Smith,” said the drover in an emphatic tone, “just you whisht now, and let the lady alone; she’s travellin’ undher my care. You’s a good judge of pigs, I dare say, but I never known you was a judge of ladies’ cloes; an’ a lady she is, whatdever. It’s no business of ours, if so be she is down on her luck.”

Smith admitted the truth of his friend’s argument, and Helena was left alone for the rest of the journey.

The boat reached Bristol at about one

o'clock at night, and the stewardess, at the instance of the drover, kept Helena on board and provided her with a bed. The next day he came down to the boat early, and having learned her destination, collected her luggage, a small wooden box and a bag, and took her to the railway station. He tried hard to be allowed to pay for her ticket, but Helena pushed his hand aside indignantly. He then begged her at least to keep his rug, but she declined this also. She took her seat in a third-class carriage, her esquire remained standing by the window. As the train moved off, he raised his hand to his hat respectfully; some sudden impulse made Helena hold out hers. The big man grasped it cordially in his great brown fist.

“God save ye, miss, an’ send you your own again wan day,” said he fervently, a

flush of pleasure and gratitude covering his cheeks, and his grey eyes twinkling. Helena smiled drearily ; the train swept on with a wild shriek, and the big drover was left behind.



CHAPTER VI.

“ You bring blithe airs where’er you tread,
Blithe airs that blow from down and sea ;
You wake in me a Pan not dead—
Not wholly dead !—Autonoë.”

A. DOBSON.

IN the front drawing-room of one of the best houses in Plantagenet Terrace, Bath, sat a couple of old ladies. It was a pretty room, owing much more to its well-proportioned size and its handsome and massive fittings than to the adventitious aids of modern upholstery. The furniture was solid and

old, the ruby velvet of the curtains sadly faded and worn, and the gilding of the tall looking-glasses tarnished, but nevertheless there was an air of solidity and antiquity about everything. There were fine pictures on the walls—a landscape or two that a connoisseur would have approved, and sea-pieces that made one almost smell the salt brine, and feel amid the half-decayed sweetness of the great jars of rose-leaves that scented the air, the rough caresses of the sea breeze. A large cabinet of black oak, in the top of which was set, the centre-point of a curious wreathing of animals, flowers, and fruit, a falcon with the motto *Rapax*. Venetian glass, of cobweb texture, and quantities of beautiful Sèvres and Dresden filled the shelves; in the centre of all stood a bouquet of late flowers—scarlet geraniums and yellow lady-slipper glowing against

the black background, and mignonette, its long stems heavy with little seed-bells, scattering its bitter-sweet perfume.

A long low book-shelf ran along one side of the room, and the old calf and morocco-bound volumes looked dingy and well-worn. On the table stood a writing-case ; open books lay about, the *Standard* and *Guardian*, some bright-coloured needle-work, and in the centre a graceful marble statuette.

The younger of the two ladies was seated before the writing-case ; she might be sixty-eight or seventy. A handsome old woman with imperious features, a short upper lip and a rich mellow tinted skin, to which the glowing colours of the hangings seemed an appropriate framing, and large full eyes. Her hair was not yet quite white, and she had plenty of it, but it was gathered plainly back out of sight beneath a cap

of lace and velvet. Her dress was the finest, softest, black cashmere, and she wore ruffles of fine lace at her throat and wrists. The other old lady sat near the fire, in a curious old leaning chair, on the back of which was embroidered, in now faded silk, a huge monogram F, surmounted by the crest and motto. She was a few years older than her sister, but was much more feeble physically and mentally. Her hair was snowy white, and her full dark brown eyes had a feeble clouded look ; she had been knitting something of soft fleecy wool, but the needles lay unheeded in her lap, and the ball had rolled away across the rug.

“Clanrickarde has not named a day, then, you say.”

The lady sitting at the table took up a letter, as she replied :

“No, Elizabeth, our nephew has not

arranged a day or time." Then she fixed a pair of gold spectacles on her nose, and, for the second time, unfolded a very dirty half-sheet of paper, on which was scrawled, in the Honourable Clanrickarde Ferrard's unformed characters, the following epistle:

"DR ANTS,

"This Is to let you kno that Helenna excepts yr offer with thanks, and she will leeve imediatly"—(Clan had made several attempts at "immediately," and the result was a terrible smudge)—"per Cork to bristol. My father is wel and all here at present, which I hope this finds you and my ant Elizabeth the same.

"Yrs obediently,

"CLANRICK DE FERRARD."

Miss Ferrard read this effusion, which, be it observed, bore neither date nor address, and shook her head slowly. Then she

folded it, put it back in the dirty blue envelope belonging to it, and opening the case of her writing-desk, laid it carefully aside. She rose and walked to the bay-window and looked across the top of the jardinière, then turned, after a moment or two, and seated herself opposite her sister by the fireside.

“I fear, Elizabeth,” said she, after a pause of a few minutes, which she spent looking with a troubled brow into the fire, “we have not yet realised the responsibility and magnitude of the task we have undertaken. Were she a child, it would be different; but she is sixteen, and at that age her habits, I fear, will be formed. And it is so difficult to eradicate rooted habits; think how she has been brought up.”

“Well, my dear, it cannot be helped. Pray do not distress yourself on my account. After all, she is a child still; she

is—" (Miss Elizabeth Ferrard stopped, hesitating, and turned her knitting in her long white fingers)—"she may be a child in many ways. I have no doubt that in point of instruction she is behind most children of half her age ; but I fear the Ferrard temper. Her mother was a common person too."

"Yes, yes, my dear; but we must make allowance. It is not everybody, my dear Alice, that has been so signally blessed as we ; removed at such an early time from contact with everything that was calculated to injure or harm us. So carefully trained, so guarded and sheltered. Indeed, my dear," continued the old lady, raising her dim eyes to her sister's face, "I have thought that we must be especially mindful of the great difference between us and this poor creature, and—and be more indulgent with her on that account. Now, Alice, is not that your idea too ? Yes, I

am sure it was. Poor little creature, we must not be hard on her."

Miss Alice Ferrard did not reply. Her brows arched themselves in a nervous angle, and her eyes strayed over the brilliant steel grate with its glowing fire, above which, on the beautiful white, carved marble mantelpiece, a Dresden clock, wreathed with the loveliest and most fragile little flowers, and surmounted by an arch shepherdess and shepherd, with lips parted in a smile of eternal happiness, ticked so peaceably and calmly. A bronze Hermes, with upheld caduceus, was poised gracefully on a tiny sphere; and a charming Hebe, presenting a cup with nod and beck and wreathed smile, a stray sunbeam lighting up her dusky dimples, was his companion, divided from him always by the shepherdess and shepherd, on top of their eminence; two long, slender glasses held tall

fuchsias and a spike or two of flame-coloured gladiolus, and bronze candelabra filled the ends of the mantelpiece. Everything was bright, well kept, and in order. Miss Alice noticed this with a sigh, and looked almost sorrowfully at a splendid tortoise-shell cat, who, curled on a soft-knitted cushion, was asleep at her sister's feet. She observed the ball of white wool lying in perilous proximity to the cat's feet, and, picking it up, laid it with a sigh in her sister's lap.

"Ralph said if she comes at all to-day, it will be about three o'clock. It is now a quarter past three." And Miss Alice went once more to the window to look out. Scarcely had she taken a survey of the street when she uttered a little cry of surprise.

"Some one is getting out at our door, Elizabeth. Can it be Helena? but I see no luggage. Oh! perhaps it has been taken in. Dear, dear!"

Ere Miss Ferrard could rise from her chair to follow her sister, the door of the drawing-room was opened, and Ralph, the solemn old butler, announced in sepulchral tones, "Miss Ferrard."

The two old ladies advanced simultaneously, with hands outstretched, to the tall, awkward girl, who stood, uncertain whether to advance or not, just where she had stopped on entering the room. The dim, mellow tinge of everything, the half-shade and the faint, delicate odours, after the sunlight and noise without, almost stunned Helena; she could hardly see, and groped rather uncertainly with her clumsy gloves for the hands extended to her by her aunts.

Miss Elizabeth kissed her on the cheeks; Miss Alice, who had intended to do so, forgot it, so astonished was she at the girl's looks.

Helena, indeed, was rather the worse for

the journey ; her hair, which had not been smoothed or dressed since she left Galway, had broken partly loose from its plait, and hung in a tangled mane down her back ; her face, always sombre, was more so than ever, and her eyes expressed all her bewilderment and uneasiness ; her new hat cast an additional shadow over her countenance, for she had crushed the brim by sleeping on it in the train—and, indeed, at the present moment it was on with the wrong side to the front.

“ Now, my dear, my poor little thing,” began kind Miss Ferrard, “ come over here to the fire.”

And she took the girl’s hand in hers, and led her towards the chair beside her own. Miss Alice, who was tongue-tied from pure wonder, followed them. Helena submitted quietly, and sitting down, stared in bewilderment at her new surroundings.

"How is your father? and did you leave Clanrickarde and your other brothers well?"

"They're well," replied Helena abruptly, but distinctly. "They're all gone to Darraghmore," she added.

"Darraghmore! back to Darraghmore! Impossible!" cried Miss Alice.

Helena looked up from under her hat.

"Maybe 'twas Darraghstown. Clan was writing to the hotel the same time he wrote to *yous*."

"*Yous*!" repeated Miss Alice to herself, with a horrified shudder. "This is dreadful—dreadful! Far worse than I ever expected!"

Helena yawned now, without even the formality of putting her hand before her mouth.

"You must be tired, dear child," said

the elder lady, taking the girl's hand in hers, and pulling off the thick glove that covered it. "Did you come by Bristol? and who accompanied you?"

"Cawth put me on board at Cork, and a man who had pigs coming over took care of me; he was very kind," answered Helena simply, putting up a grimy hand to rub her forehead as she spoke.

English training and ways had not obliterated the Honourable Misses Ferrard's native sense of humour. Miss Elizabeth smiled involuntarily; but the smile was quickly followed by a sigh. Miss Alice turned aside to conceal a grim laugh.

"And who is Cawth, pray?" she asked.

Helena looked at her in wonder.

"Cawth McGonigle—she's always with us—the servant, you know."

"Would you not like to go upstairs, and

wash and dress? Pinner has a warm bath ready, and you would like to change your dress. I shall ring to have your trunks carried up."

And Miss Alice rang the bell.

Ralph received the order with stolid impassiveness, and Helena rose in obedience to her aunt's desire, and followed her up the stairs. She stepped wonderingly on soft carpets, past a conservatory filled with flowers and strange creeping plants: a white statue holding a lamp was half concealed by the leaves and tendrils of a climbing clematis. They went up two flights of stairs, and entered a little sitting-room, plainly fitted with shelves running round the walls. A sewing-machine was in one corner, an old harp in another, some pots of flowers were scattered about, and a neat little writing-table stood in the window.

"Pinner uses this room, Helena ; but it is yours. You can read and study here. Did you begin to take lessons ?"

Helena did not seem to hear her.

Then an elderly woman entered. She had a harsh face, and turned a cold, disapproving eye on the stranger as she spoke.

"The young lady's bath is ready, ma'am. Do you wish that I should attend her ?"

"Yes, Pinner," replied Miss Alice. "Come in here, Helena ; this is your bedroom."

She led the way as she spoke into a second small room, behind the sitting-room.

A snowy bed was in the centre of the room. Helena had never seen such a bed before. The pillows were frilled and laced, and in the centre was a splendid embroidered F. The counterpane was like

snow, and the muslin curtains were lined with pink. The toilet-table was a marvel of white muslin and pink ribbons, and the mirrors seemed as if desecrated by the reflection of Helena's wild face. Pretty mats stood before the toilet and the marble wash-stand, and a handsomely-fitted dressing-case stood open on the table.

"Where are your boxes, Helena? See, this is your wardrobe. Pinner will unpack and hang up your things if you give her your keys."

Then, as Miss Ferrard turned round, she caught sight of her niece's luggage—a deal box painted green, with a big, sprawling F, traced by Isidor's hand, on the lid. She gave a little gasp of horror.

Helena, perfectly unconscious to all appearance, though a demon of outraged pride was gnawing her interiorly, opened

her coat, and pulling a piece of cord out of the bosom of her dress, produced her key.

“Pinner, get ready the bath,” said Miss Ferrard.

Then, when the maid was gone, she opened the little box. In it was Helena’s Galway petticoat of black wool, so coarse and thick that it looked like a garment of raw sheep-skin; her jacket of the same, a couple of linen under-clothes of the coarsest sort, and three pairs of knitted stockings.

Miss Ferrard dropped the lid aghast, and rose from her knees.

“Do you mean to tell me, child, that your father has sent you out of his house dressed and equipped in this manner?”

“He knows nothing about me,” replied Helena sadly.

“Who got you ready? Who sent you, Helena?”

“Cawth; she bought me this hat, and this, and this, the day before yesterday, in Galway.”

Her aunt nodded, thoughtful and puzzled.

“Well,” she said resignedly, “now let Pinner do what is necessary for you, and come down then to us again. You must want something to eat.”

“My dear Elizabeth,” she said, hastening over to her sister, “this is dreadful, fearful. I really don’t know what I am to do.”

“Eh! my dear. What—what is it, pray?”

Miss Ferrard almost rose.

“Oh, sit down, sit down. This creature has come here almost in a state of nakedness. Such clothes! She has a box not

larger than your desk, filled with savage-looking things, like a peasant's clothes. She has nothing. Darraghmore—well, never mind—I told you how it would be. Is it not fortunate you did not send them fifty pounds, as you intended to do ? I must fit her out from head to foot. It is perfectly dreadful, and before Pinner and Ralph too.”

“ Oh, poor child, is that all ? Ah, well, we can arrange that. Do order them to make her some tea, and have her dinner got ready.”

In about half an hour's time, Helena, fresh from the hands of Pinner, presented herself at the drawing-room door. She looked like a new being. Her skin was soft and clear, and the natural olive paleness of her cheeks was suffused with a rose hue ; her hair was drawn back tightly off her face, giving the low forehead its full height, and adding to the width of her

beautiful temples. Pinner had washed and disentangled the mass of black hair, and plaited it in two huge, silky braids from the crown of the girl's head. Her collar had been put on properly, her clumsy dress somewhat adjusted to her figure; and almond soap had made Helena's hands something to admire and wonder at.

Pinner had found a pair of her mistress's high-heeled shoes, and these, with fine thread stockings, chanced to fit Helena exactly. She felt conscious of the change herself, and blushed a little as she walked in somewhat unsteadily, for she was unused to her foot-gear, and, moreover, felt a little giddy. She made her way over to the chair she had occupied before. Her aunt looked up suddenly as she approached her.

“Ah! my dear, you have come down. Yes, yes, you have had Pinner to help you,

I hope. How pleased your aunt Alice will be !”

At that moment Miss Alice appeared, to summon Helena to her lunch. She could scarcely forbear a cry of approval.

Helena read her surprise with a glance of her great eyes, and a slight frown traced itself in her forehead.

“Now, come down; the child must be starved.” And she took Hel’s arm and led her downstairs.

Ralph was in readiness at the foot of the stairs, and flung open the dining-room door. Helena walked awkwardly behind her aunt, stepping every now and then on the old lady’s trailing skirt. When she got in she was almost dazzled. The afternoon sun streamed in, lighting up an exquisitely-appointed table. A vase of chased silver in the centre held tea-roses, graceful fern-leaves, and feathery clusters of clematis.

A silver tray with urn marked Miss Ferrard's seat at the head of the table. A napkin and a little cover-dish stood before her seat. The butter was unrecognisable, under the form of pale shells and rings, floating in a crystal dish of water. The sideboard was opposite the window, and its plate-glass back reflected all the brilliancy. Round the walls hung portraits, which looked at Helena with a somewhat familiar expression, as do faces of people once known, and almost, but not quite, forgotten. One picture in especial—a youth, with soft, large, brown eyes that seemed to follow her about the room, resting one hand on a greyhound's head, caught her eye; long curls hung on his shoulders, and a froth of lace filled the open of his scarlet coat. How like Isidor, she thought. It was like him; there was the same short curved lips and round chin, the eyes at once daring

and sad. Helena did not hear her aunt's questions—would she help herself to a cutlet? should she give her sugar? Her eyes were intent on the picture.

“That is your great-great-uncle, my dear. Yes, Brandon Ferrard; he was killed at Ramillies.”

Helena looked again. “It is just Isidor,” said she, with a sudden flush of animation kindling in her great eyes. Ralph, the butler, looked up at a beauty of Sir Godfrey Kneller's—a pale lady, with dark hair gathered off her face into a cap, and troubled, large, blue eyes wandering far away from the poppies and dog-roses in her hand—and from her back to the young stranger's face. There was a strong resemblance between them, and he uncovered the dish before Helena with something more of respect in his manner.

Helena's manners at table fully confirmed

the bad impressions her appearance and dress had already given her new relations. She showed herself to be perfectly uncivilised. Her aunts were shocked and pained, but they decided to take no notice of her until the next day.

As soon as Miss Ferrard had crashed her cup into her saucer and had declined further refreshment, they rose to go upstairs. Rough and uncouth as Helena was, she had yet some native sense of fitness; for, although sitting nearest to the door, which to her might have suggested that she was to go out first, she drew back instinctively to let her aunt pass before her. Miss Elizabeth looked meaningly at her sister and smiled.

“You see, my dear. Oh, trust me, you will soon tame her!”

Once in the drawing-room Helena stretched herself willingly in a low loung-

ing-chair, and began to answer the questions with which her aunt Alice plied her.

What did she do? when did she rise? the occupation of the boys, and so on.

Hel, who was silent by nature and habit, answered as best she could; and in a short time the two old ladies were fairly acquainted with the habits of their kinsfolk. Lord Darraghmore appeared between one and two; if it was fine he took a short stroll in the sun with Wasky the wolf-dog. The rest of the day he lay on a sofa and read the paper or smoked. Sometimes she helped Cawth; mostly she was out fishing or hunting rabbits with Isidor. She hadn't been out for more than a fortnight now; and Hel, thinking of the weary days in the close room at Galway, sighed heavily.

"No, dear child, of course not, so soon after the funeral of your poor mamma," said her eldest aunt approvingly.

“Yes,” answered Helena, “the boys had to fish all the time; we had no money.”

Then she fell asleep in her chair, overcome by fatigue and by the drowsy warmth and quiet. Aunt Alice started forward to rouse her, but Miss Elizabeth intercepted her outstretched arm.

“No, dear, let her sleep; she is tired, poor little thing. Just leave all efforts until after to-day. How pretty she is!”

The old ladies looked admiringly at the sleeping girl, the fine oval of whose face showed to perfection against the dark velvet of the chair. Her lips were parted and moved slightly as she breathed, showing the white even teeth between. One foot was advanced carelessly, and the high arched instep and slender ankle Helena had inherited from her southern kinsfolk

were apparent now, clad in Miss Alice's pretty shoe and cobweb-like hose.

"Pretty! yes," assented Miss Alice; "but a Ferrard, with a Ferrard temper. Mark those brows, Elizabeth. See, she frowns even in her sleep."

"Don't say that, dear—now, don't; she is young, and she will change—she will improve."

"Ah, Elizabeth, if we had but caught her younger! I fear greatly she is set. And you know the Ferrard temper. What would we have been now if Lady Conyers had not taken us? and we were infants."

"Well, my dear Alice, we must only try."

Helena retired to bed early. Her toilet for the night was soon made, her habits being certainly characterised by the most marked simplicity. She pulled the bows off her hair, and shook the long plaits until

they felt comfortably loose. She felt afraid to go near the toilet-table lest she should break or spoil something, and she had already broken a Venetian glass in the drawing-room, so she flung all her clothes on her bed just as she had been used to do at home, and crept in. She had been told by her aunts that Pinner would take away her candle, so she left it burning on the chimney-piece. When that discreet personage came some twenty minutes later, she cast looks of horror at the pretty room and its occupant, who was already sleeping peacefully in the midst of the disorder around. Helena's shoes and stockings were lying where they had fallen as she divested herself of them after getting into bed. The black crape bows Pinner had made and fastened into the young lady's hair were lying here and there on the floor, and the grimy black clothes were tumbled

about the snowy counterpane. Pinner shook her head grimly ; she picked up the litter, put everything in its proper place, collected the skirts, and hung them in the wardrobe, folded the rest of Helena's clothes neatly on a chair beside her bed, and last of all took out the hair-brushes and combs, and ranged them on the toilet-table. On the chimney-piece was a nicely-bound Bible ; Pinner took this down, and laid it conspicuously on the table among the brushes and combs, then she walked off, wondering if the young lady would take a hint next morning from these little arrangements.

Helena slept until eight o'clock. The maid awoke her at that hour, and pulling back the curtains, let in a flood of clear sunlight into the room.

Helena jumped up in bed, and rubbing her eyes, stared drowsily at the new-comer.

“Good-morning, miss,” said Pinner, not unkindly; “I hope you are rested. I have brought you warm water. Would you like me to do your hair, or will you be able to do it yourself the way I did yesterday?”

Pinner spoke in an impressive tone, with her little, cold, blue eyes fixed on Helena.

“Oh, I’ll do it,” she replied a little doubtfully, but still with independence.

“Very well, miss,” replied the maid. “You can ring if you want me, and breakfast will be ready at nine, prayers at ten minutes to nine.”

Then she went away, and Helena, glad to be alone, sprang out of bed. She looked all round bewildered for her clothes and shoes and stockings. First the array of brushes and the Bible caught her eye, then a light broke upon her. Pinner had done all this after she went to bed. She noted

the position of the symmetrically-folded clothes, of the shoes and stockings, and resolved never to incur that tacit reproach again; so after an elaborate toilet, very unusual for her, she went down to breakfast, feeling slightly fatigued, and very hungry.

She sprang into the dining-room, throwing the door open in such an impetuous way that it crashed against a chair behind it with such force that Ralph, who was arranging his sideboard, jumped round with a start. Even the Persian cat sat up on the stool, and arched its back with a nervous shudder. Helena looked round. Her aunts had not yet come down, and she felt puzzled what to do. She walked over to the window, and looked out. There was not much to interest her; a decorous, dull terrace, scrupulously clean and white. Comfortably-dressed people came and went;

no bare feet, no red petticoats, or blue cloaks ; no wild Spanish faces, with mournful, reproaching eyes, gazing from beneath the shade of their graceful hoods ; not a murmur reached her ears, used to the shrill, strange tongue of the Claddagh. The passers were all dressed alike ; not a speck of colour varied the monotony of the view. She looked up and down as far as she could reach with her eyes. Away up the street the line was broken by a patch of green, and she sighed, thinking of her view of the harbour and bay, and her evening watch in Galway, sitting with her eyes fixed on Mauriade Blake's red petticoat away down on the quay wall. Then Isidor rose to her mind, and remembering the picture whose black eyes had followed her yesterday, she crossed hastily to where it was hanging, and mounted a chair to view it closer. Certainly it was like Isidor.

There were the same daring, brave eyes, the short, imperious upper lip, and the dimple on the round chin. If Isidor were only dressed like that, thought Helena, surveying with a woman's appreciation the fine laced cravat and scarlet coat of her ancestor, Brandon Ferrard.

"Good-morning, Helena," said a grave voice behind her.

Helena leaped to the floor instantly. Her aunt Alice had come in, key-basket in hand, and with a shawl of some light fleecy wool over her shoulders.

"Good-morning, my dear," repeated the old lady, stooping forward and kissing the girl's forehead gravely. "You must manage to look at the pictures without standing on the chairs. Now, my dear, we shall have prayers. Do you see the Bibles over there, on the top of the bookcase. Hand them to me. Where is your own ?

Oh yes, I forget ; run up to your room and bring down your new one, off the chimney-piece."

Helena ran upstairs, and speedily returned with her Bible. Miss Ferrard had come down meantime, and Pinner, Ralph, and a female servant whom Helena had not seen before, were ranged by the side-board.

Helena was slightly out of breath, she had jumped almost half of the last flight ; forgetting to shut the door, she advanced to receive her aunt Elizabeth's kiss.

"Now, my dear," said Aunt Alice, "the door."

"Oh," said Helena, and stepping forward she gave the panel a vigorous push with her foot, and the door clapped with a noise that made her aunts jump.

"My *dear* child !" And Miss Alice left her place and opened the door again.

"Now shut it always so. So," she repeated, as, having gently closed it, she passed Helena on her way back.

Then prayers began. Helena read her verse three times too quickly and miscalled several words, to the evident tribulation of the colony by the sideboard. At last it was over, the servants filed out, and they sat down to breakfast.

"Helena," began Miss Alice. "I wish to say something to you before we begin. You must be conscious yourself of your deficiencies of manner and deportment. Now, my dear, I think we had better begin at once to remedy the most glaring of them; and you will observe, that in telling you this, I desire to have you resemble, as nearly as possible, your aunt Elizabeth."

Helena, who was gravely pouring tea into her saucer, heedless of the trickle

running from the bottom of the cup on to the snowy cloth, listened attentively and with her great eyes fixed upon her aunt.

“Now, my dear, my dear !”—Miss Alice’s tone betrayed the least shade of asperity —“ no one out of a kitchen drinks tea so. Pour it all back into your cup, and never do that again.”

Helena obeyed willingly but clumsily, and by the time the cloth had received a second libation, this time offered up to the *bienséances*, she was obliged to move away to a dry corner, close by Miss Alice. She proved an apt pupil, however, and before the breakfast was over had learned to hold and use her knife and fork, to sit and eat properly, and delighted Miss Elizabeth by her docility and eagerness to learn.

“ After breakfast, Helena, we go out,

you and I together. I must get you some dresses at once.”

Helena thought of her shopping expedition with her nurse in Galway, and wondered how this fresh one would be conducted. Ralph was instructed to call a fly, and at eleven they set out. A fashionable mourning warehouse in Milsom Street was the first place visited, and Helena's measure was taken for three dresses. A morning dress of plain black, a walking suit of black silk, and an afternoon dress of cashmere. Then to the shoemakers and various outfitters, despatch being enjoined on all as a *sine quâ non*. Helena was unimpressed by everything she saw ; she expressed neither admiration nor desire, and assented mutely to all her aunt's suggestions. She seemed to be, as indeed she was, utterly destitute of vanity ; and the admiring looks which were directed

at her in the street, and in the shops, she, ascribing them to impertinent curiosity and criticism, repelled by a sullen frown. She was soon tired of shopping, and of the crowd of strange faces; the novelty wore off speedily, and she wished herself back. Only that she did not know the way home, she would have slipped quietly away from her seat by the counter, and have left Miss Alice to decide between the rival merits of Bonnet's and Fournier's silks, without any aid from her. Her head ached, too; the stiff, uncomfortable braids into which, in imitation of Pinner, she had tortured her hair, pained her, and the garish colours of the goods displayed wearied her eyes. She began to think of home, and wondered vaguely what the boys were doing. She puzzled what Daraghstown was like; not Galway, for it was not by the sea; nor Coleraine, nor Thurles,

nor any of the places she had been in, in Ireland. It was there her father had been born and brought up, no wonder he liked it. Cawth too was glad to go there; what could it be like? Then she remembered that it was idle for her to think about Darraghstown. She was never to see it, so she put the thought out of her head. Only for a minute; in spite of herself it came back.

“There was the Darragh river running through the town, so close behind some of the houses that you could fish out of window;” she remembered Cawth’s talk over the fire, the last night she spent in Galway. “And there was the racks full of salmon, and watched all night, in the season, by Lord Comerford’s men.” And Hel, sitting on a high-legged chair in a fashionable draper’s shop, watching her aunt choose linens, felt with a sort of pang

a strange longing for a hiding-place by another river well known to her and Isidor—a noisy brawling trout-stream, that ran red-coloured from the bogs through one of their favourite haunts. Helena thought of the last July day she spent by it, lying so still and quiet in a shady corner that the water-hens swam to and fro almost within reach of her hand, and the swallows darted unconcernedly from bank to bank, taking now a fly from the very surface, and then a tiny shell from the grass at the edge, heedless of the sun-glare that drove the dun-coloured trout beneath the sedges, and the cattle, fly-plagued, to the shelter of the woods and hedgerows. She could almost hear the snapping of the creatures' beaks, and the hum of the bees in the branches above her.

She answered "yes" when she should

have said "no" to Aunt Alice's remarks, and looked so abstracted and indifferent to the weighty discussion about the proper length of her skirts, that Miss Alice at last got angry, and requested her sarcastically to descend from the moon, if it were only for politeness' sake.

At last they got home. The early dinner passed off without much mishap. Helena was attentive to Miss Alice's liberal hints, and ate her dinner slowly and solemnly. At last it was over too, and they returned to the drawing-room. Helena did not care to sit by the fire; she went over to a window-seat, to look out.

It was a bright, clear day out of doors, late autumn as it was. The summer was not quite gone; just a fringe of her gay robes still trailed behind. The few trees to be seen from Plantagenet Terrace were still clad in their summer garb. The chest

nuts alone showed signs of decay ; their long leaves were bruised and rusty, and the chestnuts were splitting and falling from their spiked sheaths.

Helena looked enviously at the school-children who were kicking away the dead leaves to discover the glossy, new-fallen fruit. A big boy flung stones at the high branches, and the whole band rushed, with cries of delight, when one or two fell, to seize upon and dispute for them. Presently a policeman appeared, and shook his head warningly ; a nurse seized the big boy by the arm and dragged him away, scolding furiously, and the troop scattered in every direction.

Helena looked up and down the street vainly in search of something interesting ; then, disappointed, she went to the book-cases, and took down one of the faded volumes, and opened it to see the name.

She could not read the gilt lettering on the back : "Gibbon's Decline and Fall." She wondered what that could be about ; there were no pictures to illumine her, and the long, unbroken pages did not look promising. She poked it back into its place, upside down ; then tried the next row—"Blair's Rhetoric," Macaulay, Hume ; then a whole row of white and gold Italian authors. Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth she found in one corner, and left them there.

At last an illustrated edition of "Gulliver's Travels" came to hand. She was attracted by the title, and carried it off. Had she tried the bottom shelf, she would have discovered the English dramatists, beginning with Shakespeare in the right-hand corner, and going on from Jonson in a direct line down to her brilliant countryman Sheridan. As it was, she missed them,

and having curled herself comfortably in the window, began her book.

Miss Ferrard was dozing meantime tranquilly in her easy-chair. Miss Alice was writing notes at her table, and entering in a leather-bound book her outlay for Helena that morning.

Presently the leather-covered book was shut with a snap, and Miss Alice looked over at her niece, who, with both legs curled up tailor-wise in her chair, was buried in her book. In a moment she was beside her.

“ Helena, my dear, a young lady does not sit so. Stand up.”

Down come both legs with an impatient jerk. Helena was standing bolt upright, the book clasped wide open against her breast.

“ Lay down your book, dear, if you please. Now, like me.”

Miss Alice spread out her handsome skirt at each side, and seated herself gracefully. Helena imitated her as nearly as she could, and her aunt walked off content.

She did not notice that her pupil, whose book had been laid rather out of reach, was obliged to disarrange her *pose* again to resume it, and that in reseating herself she completely forgot the lesson she had just received. She was allowed to read undisturbedly until Miss Ferrard woke up, then Aunt Alice called her over.

“Helena, dear, I think your aunt Elizabeth would like you to read out to us. Anything at all. See, here is the *Standard*; take the leading article, and read loud and distinctly.”

Miss Alice handed the paper to Helena, who turned it round and round, wondering what was meant by the leading article.

Her aunt came to the rescue, and pointed it out.

Helena began to read loudly enough, but utterly unintelligibly. Every word was mispronounced or wrongly accented, and the punctuation totally ignored.

Miss Alice uttered a little scream before the first sentence had been got through.

“My dear child, that will do—that will do! Oh dear! how dreadful, Elizabeth! Could you have believed it possible?”

Then Helena was allowed to go back to the window and “Gulliver,” while the old ladies discussed this new revelation.

Helena’s mode of reading her verse that morning had not been unnoticed by Miss Alice. It was clear that the child had been neglected in every way, and the sooner such a state of affairs was remedied the better. A governess, of course, must be got for her, and at once; and Miss

Alice decided to apply to the clergyman of the parish, as the most likely to know of a suitable person.


In a few days a daily governess was engaged to instruct the Honourable Miss Ferrard in all the branches of a polite education—music, languages, English, drawing, and needlework.



CHAPTER VII.

“ I will begone ;
Shall I stay here to do it ? No, no, although
The air of paradise did fan the house ,
And angels officed all, I will be gone.

Come, night, end, day,
For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away.
All's well that ends well.”

“  MOST reliable person, so methodical and trustworthy, and so experienced ; elderly—well—ah—er—my dear Miss Ferrard, elderly—yes, elderly—about that.”

“ I am glad to hear that she is experienced with girls ; and, Mr. Chol-


mondely, I had feared that my dear sister Alice and myself were rather unsuited to manage our niece Helena. She is so young, and we are not accustomed to young people. She must find everything so strange here. But now, with Miss Babcock's experience to aid us, nothing can go wrong."

And gentle Miss Elizabeth looked at her friend and pastor with eyes positively beaming with gratitude.

He was a pale, meagre little man, of fifty or thereabouts, gentleman-like, with a great deep voice, of which he seemed to like to hear the sound as it reverberated through the room; very "high" as to doctrine and ritual. He wore a priest's collar that reminded Helena of the Roman Catholic priests at home, only this one was thin and pale, and a gentleman; a tolerably clever man, but spoiled, as clergymen

in such places as Bath are apt to be, by associating too exclusively with the softer sex.

Helena, from a far corner, surveyed him with something of contempt—"a sickly-looking, stooped thing; Clan could fight him with one hand." And she disliked his critical way of looking at her, and asking her what she thought of England—was it not a change from "her own green isle?" Green isle, indeed! Helena's eyes flashed. And he said he found such a difficulty in understanding the people in Cork one summer he and Mrs. Cholmondely had been there; they spoke such a curious dialect—quite unpleasant to listen to—painful he might say. Altogether, he was sure her aunts, though of course they would have a natural predilection for the land of their birth, would join him in saying England was much nicer, more—er—er—agreeable as a permanent residence.



Miss Alice assented, smiling. "Ireland, for her part, was a charming place to live out of." She had forgotten everything about it long ago.

Helena scarcely understood the little man whose sonorous voice seemed to be rolling and echoing among the Cupids and Dons of the ceiling, but she divined his meaning fast enough, and bent her dark brows in an ungracious scowl.

"Oh yas," he continued patronisingly, "by the time Miss Ferrard has been a few years among us she will have lost her antipathy to England and English ways." (Helena began to understand Cawth's puzzling sayings now.) "Why—er—how any one can live in Ireland except—er—in constant bodily fear I can't imagine, really. I should be in perpetual terror of being shot—ha, ha!"

"You needn't," Helena exploded con-

temptuously; "we don't buy powder for nothing."

"Ha, ha, ha!" This time his laugh was thoroughly genuine, and he turned round in his chair to look at the speaker. "Why that is capital—capital! I never heard that before. Powder not bought for nothing! My dear young lady, I wish everybody would think so with regard to everybody else—ha, ha!—in your country! Excellent! though—ah! you Irish" (with a patronising soothing tone) "are so quick-witted; yes, you really are quickwitted now. But I must be going. Not any more sherry—oh dear no, thank you. Good-bye, Miss Ferrard; I shall look for my young friend at St. Botolph's on Sunday. Good-bye."

"Well, my dear," said Miss Alice gleefully, when the deep notes had died away on the staircase, waking strange echoes in that silent house, "it is settled.

Miss Babcock will come to us at ten next Monday morning, to remain until three. How good of Mr. Cholmondely to call and tell us all about it."

"Ah, yes!" returned Miss Elizabeth, "he is such a zealous creature. Helena, dearest, don't you like Mr. Cholmondely?" And without waiting for Helena's answer, for which indeed she might have waited long enough, Miss Ferrard pursued: "The Braziers have come back for the winter. How early the place is filling, is it not, Alice? I did remark this morning that there were a number of people in the boarding-house at the opposite corner. Did you not see them? We must call upon the Braziers directly, and the Welds, and Lady St. Johns—how nice."

"Yes. We shall have quite a gay winter, shall we not? and as soon as Helena has done something, made some

progress with Miss Babcock, we must see about having the third Brazier girl—yes, Guinevere Brazier is just her age—down to take tea with her; she must have a companion of her own age. Helena! do not hold your book so.”

“Dear yes,” said Miss Elizabeth, laying down her knitting with an air of astonishment that the idea had not occurred to her before. “Of course, Alice, we must remember that, we must remember that.”

Then the two old ladies sat down to digest the news their pastor had brought, and Helena was forgotten for the nonce. She felt in no humour for “Gulliver” now, and she began to speculate as to Miss Babcock, whose threatened apparition furnished ample food for her imagination. She ransacked her memory in vain for an example of a governess. Cooper and Mayne Reid had overlooked that character

in their *dramatis personæ*, so her erudition was no help to her, and she had to fall back upon her meagre experience. There had been a governess with some family living on the Salthill Road in Galway. She recollected a shabby, quiet-looking person who was always telling the young Bloods not to walk in the dirty places, and always running after them along the road. She remembered the children abusing her and calling her names, threatening to tell their mamma if she refused to do something they wanted. A governess could not be such a terrible personage after all, Helena reflected. She remained in her place quietly for about an hour. The ample velvet curtain had fallen forward so as to hide her from the room, but she could see her aunts still seated talking cheerfully together by the fire. The dusk was falling and she could not read, neither was there

anything to be seen in the street. It was quiet, and dull, and warm within. The cat lay in a ball on his cushion, and the fire-light shone on Miss Elizabeth's snowy hair as she knitted and talked in her low rich voice. The Venetian goblets shimmered on the oak cabinet, the crimson and yellow of the flowers, not withered yet, glowed fitfully among the china maestros and gods on the shelves; and on the mantelpiece the cut crystals of the candlesticks sparkled like diamonds.

Helena lounged at her ease with her arm over the back of the chair, staring fitfully at the fire. She felt weary, and she did not know why; she tried to listen to the conversation, but the names were all strange and uninteresting, and she fell into a dream about Isidor and herself. They were out in a boat, near Arran, at anchor, and fishing. She could feel the

salt strong breeze from the Atlantic lift the hair off her temples under her old hat, and the waves rocked the boat, and now and again a fleck of spray was blown on her cheek. The Clare mountains lay bathed in purple and gold to the south, and the horizon was flecked by the brown sails of the fishers. Rusty, the lurcher, sat in the stern, looking uncomfortable, yet confident, after the manner of dogs in unwonted positions. Again, they were in the woods, the autumn leaves rustling under foot and flying off in sudden skiffs across the dry ruddy grass. She and Rusty had chased them and kept up with the best of them many a time. The blackberries hung in ripe clusters down to the very edge of the grass, and the cones were tumbling from the high branches of the pines. There was a sharp taste in the air, and in sheltered corners an autumn smell

came from the mould and the heaps of damp leaves. She would lie watching the rabbits for hours, while Isidor went to look for hares farther off, or stroll cautiously down to the weir to see if his night-line held a fish.

Helena mused and dreamed, and in spite of herself a sort of fretting desire came over her to be back to the old scenes again. She drew a deep breath of longing for the fresh sea breezes and the heather she had revelled in all the past summer, but she inhaled only the faint warm rose-scent that came from the china jars beneath the console. Then she sighed half impatiently, then stood up suddenly off her chair as if to shake from her such vexing memories. Aunt Elizabeth turned round at the stir.

“ Helena, dear child, come up here to the fire. Why are you moping down there ? come now, and sit near me, my pet.”

The girl obeyed languidly, and submitted to have her cheek stroked by Miss Elizabeth's soft jewelled fingers. She was not of a caressing or affectionate nature, her bringing up had been singularly devoid of all softening or lovable influences, and though a physiognomist might trace in her full lips and the ardent deep eyes capabilities of future passion, fiery and wild when once raised, she was as unresponsive and unsympathetic as some strong wild bird, which may crouch under your hand, but has its gleaming eyes fixed on the sky and its pinions straining for flight all the time.

Three days, inclusive of Sunday, had to be got over somehow before the exciting advent of Miss Babcock on Monday, and how Helena suffered in the interval no pen could describe. The heavy steamy atmosphere of Bath was in itself depressing

to one accustomed to the fresh Atlantic breezes. The orderly methodical household, with its clockwork routine and unvarying monotony, galled the young barbarian's wild untamed spirit, and she fretted and chafed like some caged animal. To look out of window presented little variety—rows of prim, methodical houses, whose very walls expressed the comfort, cleanliness, and prim orderliness which form the glory of Bath; they had all the same bright knockers and bell-handles and snowy doorsteps, cleaned at much expense of labour and Bath-stone. How useless, objectless it all appeared to Helena, brought up in the fatalistic self-indulgent *abandon* of the Galway tribes.

She was taken out to her afternoon promenade in Milsom Street, where she and her aunt Alice walked beside Miss Ferrard's pretty Bath-chair, and threaded

their way leisurely among a throng of people—invalids and cripples, oddly contrasting with fresh golden-haired girls, to look at whom made poor Helena feel wilder and more wretched than before.

Then came Sunday. The chimes from the Abbey Church made Hel inclined to throw back her head and howl as the dog in the next-door garden did. At last it ceased, and then the oppressive stillness of a Bath Sunday held its sway until morning service began to ring, and the rattle of the Bath-chairs, carrying the invalids to church, filled the whole place. Hel joined in the procession, and walked demurely beside her elder aunt's chair. On they went amid the deafening clamour of the bells, and into the Abbey churchyard. The fresh look and glare of light rather repelled than charmed her, and after tumbling over the

hassocks she at last seated herself disconsolately in the farthest-off corner of her aunt's roomy pew. She found some occupation in staring at the yellowing marble monuments—one in especial, where a disconsolate Sarah Green wept over an urn, her marble visage concealed by a remarkably dirty handkerchief. Her soon exhausted the interest of this wondrous production, and pleasant memories of Sundays in the smoky, dirty room in Galway commenced to crowd upon her with a most exasperating clearness, playing beggar-my-neighbour or *écarté* for pence with Isi, until the church-time was over, and they could escape to the Claddagh or the fields, for even in Galway they respected public opinion sufficiently to stay indoors during service. Not all the preacher's oratory sufficed to exorcise the spirit of restlessness and *ennui* that now

possessed her, and it was with an earnest vow never to enter its portals again that Helena ascended the steps of the Abbey Church when the weary service was over.

Monday morning came at last, and brought Miss Babcock punctually at the time appointed. She was a middle-aged Englishwoman, very plain of face, angular, and stilted of manner as became a person always on the watch for the deficiencies of others, and to whom a lapse into naturalness or ease might have been perilous. If governesses are obliged to watch their young charges, they have always the consciousness that they are themselves under a strict and malicious *surveillance*, and liable at any moment to be "hoist with their own petard." Ralph showed her up to the drawing-room, and went into the dining-room to announce the arrival ; the

breakfast was scarcely over. Miss Alice took Helena, now dressed in a suitable morning dress, with neat cuffs and snowy collar and tie, above which her wild poetic face looked doubly strange, up to introduce her to her new Mentor. Miss Alice shook hands a little condescendingly with Miss Babcock.

“This is our niece—our brother’s daughter, Miss Ferrard—your pupil, Miss Babcock,” she said with a glance at Helena, who stared at her, never dreaming of returning the formal and correct salutation with which the governess acknowledged her presentation.

“We shall be good friends I hope, Miss Ferrard,” she said a little fussily, for she was duly impressed by the young lady’s social status. “My dear pupils, Lady Saltster’s daughters, with whom I spent five such happy years, were so

attached to me when I left, they presented me, the darling girls, with a handsome locket; all their names—do you see, Miss Ferrard?—are engraved inside.” She had opened a queer old locket, half glass, and was exhibiting it as she spoke. “ ‘ Alicia, Maud, and Elinor.’ They are all married now—so well married,” continued Miss Babcock, as if that fact also, like the presentation of the locket, redounded to her credit.

“ You will find Helena backward for her age,” began Miss Alice, a little nervously. “ You see—er—living always in the country, and poor Lady Darraghmore had such wretched health—dreadful—er—quite so. And in the country, in Ireland especially——”

“ Oh, I quite understand, Miss Ferrard—quite ! I assure you, Miss Saltster—now Mrs. Comberbatch—will be Lady Comber-

batch—at sixteen could hardly write her name. You have no idea of how quickly she got on; an eldest daughter and her father's favourite. Sir John never rode to hounds without Miss Saltster until I came to them. Oh yes, I quite understand all that."

Miss Alice gave tokens now that she considered the interview had lasted long enough. And Miss Babcock rose :

" We may proceed to our task I suppose, Miss Ferrard. I have taken the liberty"—she produced a black reticule of considerable dimensions as she spoke—" of bringing some school-books, supposing that my pupil had very likely omitted to bring her own from home with her. If you have already procured them, of course I can return them to the booksellers."

Miss Babcock fixed anxious eyes on her employer's face as she finished.

“ Oh, quite right, Miss Babcock ; I am glad you have been so thoughtful ; it will save time so nicely. Now, if you will allow me, I will take you up to the school-room. Come, Helena.”

Miss Babcock grasped her black bag, which, indeed, seemed very heavy, with a reassured expression of countenance, and followed Miss Ferrard.

In accordance with that useful and highminded practice which has crept into general use in British commerce, of touting or commission, Miss Babcock, like other teachers, was allowed a handsome percentage, twenty-five per cent., on all books she bought or caused to be bought at the booksellers' she favoured, so of course she was anxious to secure the munitioning of Miss Ferrard's schoolroom. She had noted the absence of a piano in the drawing-room ; and all the way upstairs her mind was exclusively

occupied by the hope that the schoolroom might also be destitute of that modern instrument of torture.

They entered the little sitting-room which had been set apart for Helena's use. And Miss Babcock cast admiring glances round, glances which became positively rapturous when she discovered that her wildest hopes were realised—that there was no schoolroom piano.

“A charming room, Miss Ferrard, so airy, so isolated; the room of all the house that I would have selected. It quite reminds me of the dear old schoolroom at Lady Saltster's—oh, quite! but the aspect is different—the park, you know; and the schoolroom was on the ground-floor, jessamine and roses growing round the windows. A bower—a perfect bower—our schoolroom was.”

“Well, now, Miss Babcock,” said Miss

Ferrard, her low-pitched but distinct tones falling musically on Helena's ears after the governess's shrill, hard voice, "I shall leave you and Helena to become acquainted with each other. I think we know what is to be done."

"Pardon me," said Miss Babcock, "did I not understand you to say that Miss Ferrard was to learn music?"

"Certainly!"

"I did not observe a piano. Perhaps you meant the harp?" She looked interrogatively towards the instrument which, swathed in its green-baize cover, stood in the corner.

"Oh, I quite forgot all about it! I must speak to my sister; it was quite an oversight. Of course a piano must be hired—at all events until we see about purchasing one."

"It is a very important matter, in pur-

chasing or hiring a piano, to procure one suited to the touch and to the requirements of the pupil. I hope you will be good enough to allow me to select the instrument for Miss Ferrard, subject, of course, to your approval. Pedal and Truss have just got a capital assortment of pianos from London, for hire as well as sale. I have dealt there exclusively for my pupils and myself, and they are most satisfactory."

Miss Babcock had quite recently selected a two hundred guinea grand piano for a rich county family, who had confided the choice of the instrument to her; and the commission—forty guineas—had been paid down by the eminent firm of Pedal and Truss with the most satisfactory promptitude.

"Certainly, Miss Babcock; it is very kind of you to take the trouble. I shall

consult my sister, and let you know at two o'clock."

Then Miss Alice went away, shutting the door after her, and Helena and her governess were left together. Miss Babcock took off and shook her mangy sealskin—the cast-off, no doubt, of some Lady Saltster—and hung it, together with her bonnet, on a nail behind the door. Then she poked up the fire (the morning was sharp), placed the most comfortable chair at that side of the table next to it, and, taking her black bag in her lap, sat down.

"Now, my dear, come and sit down there—yes, with your back to the light, and see if you are acquainted with any of these books."

She opened her bag and took out a varied collection. Prominent among them "Mangnall's Questions," in a stiff, shiny cover; a French grammar, selected not so

much for its undoubted excellence as for the handsome percentage allowed on its high price; a "Murray's Grammar," a Spelling-book, a Brewer's "Guide to Science," a volume of Pinnock, a book of French dialogues and vocabulary, a French dictionary, a large book of elegant extracts, a copy-book, slate, and exercise-book. Helena watched the disgorging process with much the same wonder that a child watches the operations of the conjuror's magic bottle.

"Now, my dear," said Miss Babcock, surveying the pile in triumph—as well she might; her share of the spoil was to amount to about fifteen shillings—"let me hear you read, this—say;" and opening at random the volume of elegant extracts, she laid before Helena, who had never seen poetry in her life, and had no conception of even the meaning of the word, Shelley's "Cloud."

Helena began, but ere the second

line was read, Miss Babcock stopped her with an exclamation of mingled impatience and surprise, and, taking the book from her hands, found a prose extract. Miss Helena read in such a manner as showed that she at least understood its sense, although her pronunciation and accent made her listener stare.

“ I think we had better begin with spelling and dictation,” she said. “ Now, Miss Ferrard, you will learn that column. See, those marks indicate the syllablisng of the word and its pronunciation. Take them one by one, and when you think you know it tell me, and I will hear you by rote.” Then she drew an antimacassar, in bright wools, out of her wonderful bag, and, leaning back in her chair, commenced to net away, while Helena, with bent brows, pored over the spelling-book.

Long experience had taught Miss Bab-

cock the easiest way, for herself, of teaching. So she set Helena tasks that took her an hour at a time to con, while she sat at her ease and wrote letters, knitted or sewed. Not that she was by any means disposed to neglect her charge; she only wanted to get through her task as comfortably as possible.

Helena presently handed her the book and spelt the column down creditably enough. She had read a good deal, and could remember the words that she had seen before. The pronunciation, however, was sadly astray. At last Miss Babcock was compelled to resort to the expedient of reading over the words with her pupil, making her pronounce each one after herself. A couple of columns of the multiplication-table and a page of "Brewer's Science" were got through by two o'clock. Even the mental exertion undergone to produce this

small sum of achievement had sorely taxed Helena; her face was lead-coloured, and the drooping eyelids, languid voice, and attitude showed how severe had been the strain.

Miss Babcock's self-asserting voice rang with painful dissonance through her ears. The print seemed to dance before her eyes, and the hot, close air of the room weighed upon her chest with oppressiveness.

At last the clock struck, Miss Babcock folded up the antimacassar quickly, donned her old sealskin and bonnet, and, leaving the pile of books on the table, walked off, consumed with the desire to hear Miss Ferrard's decision about the piano.

Helena followed her down slowly. The cooler air of the staircase was delightful to her, and she stretched her arms high over her head and yawned to her heart's content. How weary and sick she felt! If every day was to be like this! She shud-

dered with repulsion at the idea. Could it be possible? and she sat down on the stairs and buried her hot face in her hands. A step and rustle disturbed her. It was Pinner coming out of Miss Ferrard's room. Helena slipped down the stairs like a flash, across a vestibule room, and out on a balcony leading to a pretty green-house, the especial care of her aunt Alice. The ground-glass door shut behind her; she sat down on the end of a shelf. The soft, fresh perfume of the lemon verbenas and heliotropes trained to the walls was refreshing to her, and the cool green of the luxuriant ferns, the shade of the vines and creepers overhead, was pleasant to her eyes, weary with gazing at the hard, monotonous columns of her book. One sash was drawn down, and she could see between the vine-stems across the gardens of Plantagenet Terrace. At the end ran a row

of stables ; over their roofs more houses ; everywhere high walls covered with ivy and creepers ; stiff well-kept gardens with flower-beds cut out in the turf ; vases filled with nasturtiums, tossed and withered-looking now, trim box-hedges and glass-houses—a bounded view certainly.

The sparrows flew to the ledge of the green-house, and chirped and looked in confidently. Miss Elizabeth fed them every morning, and they were tame and saucy. A cat, which lay basking on the parapet, looked eagerly at them, and chattered her teeth so viciously that they all took wing and lighted in a poplar-tree that grew out of the yard beneath, and whose dried leaves rustled harshly. Helena wondered if they would come back, and, heedless of the pots of balsams she was crushing, leaned forward to the open sash to look out.

Just then the door opened, and Ralph's grey head looked in.

"Miss Helena, Pinner is looking everywhere for you. The dinner-bell is just going to ring."

Helena uttered an exclamation of impatience and drew back brusquely. Down went the balsam-pot with a crash on the inlaid floor.

Ralph, who was holding the door open for her, uttered a "H'm, h'm, Miss Helena."

She knelt down and began to replace the clay with her hands.

"Pray don't, miss ; I'll put it to rights," expostulated the butler.

But Helena, on reparation intent, scraped up the clay, replaced the pot, and then, wiping her hands on her pretty black frock, passed unheedingly out on the stairs. There she fell into the hands of Pinner,

who put on an ominous face and ushered her upstairs.

“What hever ’ave you been doing, miss?” asked the maid, startled out of her usual correctness of language. “Wot ’ands you ’ave. And, my! Miss Helena, your lovely new frock! A young lady of your age ought to know better, indeed.”

Helena let her storm away. All her irritation and ill-humour had returned, and she longed to vent it in some way. Perhaps Pinner caught sight, in the mirror before which Helena was seated, of the gathering storm, for she ceased her tart observations, and commenced to brush and plait the long hair that hung down over the wrapper. She must have twitched it roughly, for Helena, after a few grimaces, suddenly jumped up, and catching the plait, pulled it away from her hands.

“I will do it; go away, you old fool!”

she cried, turning away from the mirror, and snapping, as she spoke, the comb from the astonished maid's hands. Her eyes flashed angrily, and her white teeth gleamed. Pinner delayed not a moment. She rushed off, and presently reappeared with Miss Alice, who read Helena a strong lecture on the impropriety of her conduct and her ingratitude to Pinner, who had never been told to dress her hair at all, but had volunteered of her own goodwill to assist her.

"I am shocked, perfectly shocked," Miss Alice said by way of valediction, as she was leaving the room, "to think that a niece of mine could act so. Helena, you shall not come down to dinner. You must apologise to Pinner, and you shall remain here until you do."

A scornful, short laugh greeted this declaration, and Helena flung herself into

a chair, her lips curved with contempt.

“ If she comes near me again I’ll fling her out of the window.”

This defiance reached Miss Ferrard, as she shut and locked the door after her.

Dinner was sent up on a tray to the delinquent, who refused to touch a scrap, and lay still undressed in the little easy-chair beside her bed. She felt chilled, for the window was open, and she had not exchanged her white wrapper for her afternoon dress. But she never heeded; she lay still in a stupor of exasperation and rage. Pinner to speak so, and to pull her hair. She was an old fool; for that matter Aunt Alice was another, and next time she came she would tell her so. Then she turned round with a jerk of impatience, and looked out. The sun was still shining brightly, and above the lace and bows of

her pretty toilet-table she could see the clear blue sky. The twit-twit of the sparrows came in at the open window, and to it was joined presently the cry of a goat in the garden next door. Presently Helena began to cry ; she was wearied out, and she was so lonely. If she had only her rabbit or Rusty, or even the thrush, to console her ; but it was stupid work locked up in that room so full of fine things that she felt afraid to move. How different from home ! She longed for Cawth's crabbed face, with her old cap and her woollen shawl. Her cross voice never sounded strange and awful as Aunt Alice's did, with her dress of lace and silk, and her gold chain and rings. And she cried away until with pure weariness she fell asleep.

Later in the afternoon she was awakened by her aunt Alice, who with stern countenance was standing over her.

“ Helena, I should never have expected such conduct from you. Are you ashamed of yourself ?”

Helena sat up ; her white wrapper had fallen back, her long hair, unconfined by plait or ribbon, was loose on her shoulders, and had clustered over her brows ; from beneath, her eyes looked out tear-stained and dimmed, but sullen and determined.

“ No,” she answered shortly.

“ You ought to be ashamed of yourself to say so. Have you made up your mind to ask pardon for your offence ?”

“ Of her ? the servant ?” demanded Helena scornfully.

Miss Alice looked at the rebel and shook her head.

“ Just what I expected,” she said to herself ; then, aloud and sternly, “ You shall ask Pinner’s forgiveness, and you shall not stir out of this room until you do

so. If not from your heart, at least in obedience to me."

Helena only turned her head aside with a scowl.

"You ought to remember that you owe respect to yourself, to your rank and position. Ah, your aunt Elizabeth will acknowledge now that I was right, and that she was wrong when she persisted, in spite of my warnings, in bringing such a trouble upon us."

Helena moved uneasily in her chair at the mention of her elder aunt, the genial kindness and sweetness of whose disposition had impressed even her wild nature; but she was too proud to give any sign, and Miss Alice left her as hopeless and hardened to all appearance as before.

After an hour spent by Helena in a chill torpor, the door opened, and Miss Elizabeth came in. She carried a tray in

her hand, which she set down, and taking a shawl, she advanced silently and wrapped it round Helena's shoulders. She submitted without speaking, only looking questioningly and suspiciously at the old lady. Then Miss Elizabeth sat down beside her, and said in her usual tone, only a little lower.

"Tell me now, Helena, what is all this? I should like to hear it from yourself."

Helena did not reply, but she turned and looked into her aunt's eyes with an expression at once wistful and bewildered.

"You had done something in the greenhouse first?" suggested Miss Ferrard gently. She saw that the culprit did not know where to begin.

"Yes," replied Helena, "broke a pot, and soiled my fingers and dress."

"Well, dear, and Pinner was scolding, was that it?"

"Yes, and jerked my hair, and then I——" Here an eloquent hiatus supplied the rest far better than words.

"Well, now ; and do you not agree with me that it would have been better for you to have spoken quietly to Pinner ? Are you sorry ?"

"No, Aunt Elizabeth," Helena answered, in a tone that left little doubt of her sincerity. "I ought not to have dirtied my frock ; but she ought not to have pulled my hair. I am sorry for breaking the pot," she added, with an air of concession.

Miss Elizabeth sighed.

"You will say, Helena, at least, that you are sorry for troubling your aunt Alice and me. Say that, dear, and come downstairs. We shall not mind about Pinner."

"Oh yes !" assented Helena, readily

enough. "I am sorry to trouble you."

"Very well, dear;" and Miss Ferrard lifted up the tangled mass of hair and kissed the fine brow beneath. "Now you will drink this cup of warm soup that I have brought you, and then dress and come down."

Helena obeyed. The reaction had set in after her fit of excitement and anger, and she felt chilled and exhausted. It seemed as if an entire week had passed since the morning; her temples throbbed painfully, and her aunts' voices sounded far off and strange, as in a dream. She remained all the evening lying in a chair by the fire, her long fingers held up between her face and the blaze.

Miss Elizabeth tried to get her to speak, but abandoned the attempt after a while, and contented herself with looking at her

.

from time to time with an expression of anxious concern.

Miss Alice shook her head ominously. She could understand the burst of Ferrard temper well enough, and make allowances for it ; but this secondary attack of sullenness, as she called it—nervous prostration, having its origin in physical and mental causes, it really was—baffled all her astuteness.

Helena retired early, and spent the night tossing feverishly. At breakfast she was pale, inanimate, with livid streaks round her heavy eyes, and ate little or nothing. She complained of nothing ; indeed, she did not know what to complain of.

When ten o'clock and Miss Babcock arrived together, she went upstairs resignedly. Her preceptress was in excellent humour, and announced to Helena

that her new piano would be home that afternoon, and that she hoped she would be pleased with it. Miss Babcock was evidently in high good-humour; and with reason, for she had concluded a very advantageous bargain with her old friends, Pedal and Truss.

Helena had not looked at one of the lessons marked for her the previous day, and, after a short lecture from Miss Babcock, who was in too good a humour to be seriously cross, to which she paid not the slightest attention, lessons commenced.

At about twelve o'clock the governess determined to go down and ask permission from the Misses Ferrard to take Helena out for a walk. Her experienced eye told her that the girl needed air and exercise. They consented at once, and in a few minutes Helena and Miss Babcock were walking out in the direction of the country.

They had a fine, grey day ; no sun shone, but the atmosphere was clear and dry, and the broad, white high-road was inviting-looking.

Helena, little by little, began to feel the invigorating effects of the fresh air, soft and enervating as it was. They took a quiet road, and soon left the crescents and terraces of the town behind. When they had walked a good distance up a hilly slope, they turned, and Helena could see Bath lying below ; the long sweep of houses creeping up the surrounding hills gave it the look of an amphitheatre, and the rich, beautiful champaign of Somersetshire stretched itself all round her. Then, after a look, they continued their way.

“ Well, my dear,” said Miss Babcock, “ how is your headache now ? Has the air driven it quite away ? ”

“ I don’t know,” replied Helena, who

did not indeed know if the word "head-ache" qualified the state of *malaise* she was in.

"I suppose you are thinking of home. Poor child! You'll soon get over that. Don't step down in the road to let these people pass; take the wall side of the path; never forget what is due to yourself. You stepped off the path to give way to quite common people just now. They knew me, and I was quite vexed. Turn out your left foot a little more, dear; you hold yourself otherwise extremely well."

Helena, indeed, was as straight and lithe as a young sapling, and many were the admiring looks cast upon her by the passers-by. Miss Babcock noted them with delight, and with no small wonder at the reception they met from the young lady.

"You must miss your brothers, I am

sure ; and his lordship your papa will feel quite lonely without you."

No answer.

"Darra—what—Darrastown? is that the name of the family seat?"

"Darraghmore was the name," replied Helena. "Darraghstown is the village."

"Oh, Darraghmore—more!" repeated the governess. "To be sure ; the Honourable Miss Ferrard's brother is Lord Darraghmore. I always fancied all Irish names of people's places ended in 'town.' And tell me, dear, is Darraghmore a fine place—now something like that?"

They stopped before a handsome gate-entrance leading into a magnificent demesne. As far as the eye could reach all round extended a park, wood and water charmingly intermingled, and the changing hues of the leaves making the elms, oaks, and lighter trees look like a gigantic bouquet.

Dark green, pale yellow, red, and brown glowed and lighted up the dim landscape. The swans could be seen gliding in the river, but so far away that they seemed no bigger than ducks.

Helena cast longing eyes over to the woods. One half the great iron gates stood open, and she could see right across the wide expanse of grass. The cawing of the rooks came distinctly to her ears, and now and again the sharp crack of the guns broke the stillness of the October air.

There was a shooting-party in the wood, and the rooks seemed sadly perturbed ; the black cloud flew up and down with angry cawings into the air, and settled back again in their tree-tops, only to dash out again in a moment with angry expostulations.

Helena's eyes lighted up strangely, and

her cheeks were suffused with a bright, fitful colour.

“Look, look, Miss Babcock! a hare! Do you see her?”

“No, I do not,” replied the governess indifferently.

“Do you see the fairy ring; not the near one—the large one? She’s sitting right behind it.”

And Helena, speaking in a low, excited tone, pointed with outstretched black finger in the direction of one of those circular tufts of grass longer and greener than the rest, which in her native country are called by the peasants “fairy rings.”

“Don’t *point*, my *dear* child,” exclaimed Miss Babcock, in a tone of mild but earnest reproof; “no lady *ever* points to anything.” She gently pulled down the outstretched arm as she spoke. “Let us go on a little

farther, and we shall turn back then; we have been out three quarters of an hour."

Helena obeyed with a mournful glance in the direction of the hare, whose expressive brown ears were just visible in the long grass, and they walked on in silence. How she longed to have Isidor and Rusty within reach. What a glorious chase they would have! Not that Rusty was much good, but if he failed Isidor had always a sharp three-cornered stone in his pocket, and his aim was unerring.

She maintained a dogged silence notwithstanding Miss Babcock's social efforts. Helena now despised her utterly, and distrusted her as well. She could talk of nothing that she cared to hear—the old fidgety thing. They turned after a few minutes and retraced their steps. When they passed the entrance-gate again Miss

Babcock turned coldly to her pupil, who made a move as if to stop, and said :

“Pray, Miss Ferrard, do not delay. I cannot imagine what interest a young lady can have in such things. In a boy it is quite pardonable and allowable, but it is not *proper* or becoming for a young lady.”

Helena darted a fiery look at her, and took no notice of the speech. She walked on fast as if trying to curb her irritation. Not that she was in a hurry to get back to her schoolroom, for never had she felt the confinement and dulness so insupportable. The glimpse she had so unexpectedly had of the old life, were it only through the bars of an iron gate, had set her brain reeling. The wide expanse of demesne, the woods, and the familiar sounds of the birds, had stirred her pulses strangely. The blood

coursed through her veins rapidly, and dyed her pale cheeks and lips a brilliant carmine. She pressed her fingers tight together in a perfect ecstasy of longing, and there began a sort of dull dumb gnawing in her heart. The governess watched her face in mute bewilderment; the alternations of paleness and colour puzzled her, and the excited quick step with which the girl swung along the road. At last she spoke.

“Miss Ferrard, may I beg of you to walk a little slower? we are getting quite into the town, and people will be astonished.”

Helena slacked her pace suddenly. The cold measured voice struck upon her with a shock, scattering all her dreams and memories with a blow. She almost shivered. The old dull look came back to her face, and she walked along, until they

reached her aunt's house, in mournful depression.

Pinner opened the door and glanced freezingly at Helena. Helena caught the look, and passed on without seeming to notice it. But as she went up the stairs she felt in her pocket for the old rag of handkerchief in which Cawth's two sovereigns were knotted, and, squeezing them hard in her grasp, vowed to herself she would run off—back home—away from the stupidity, the orderliness, the oppressiveness, and luxury of her new state.

Then she took off her things, and resumed the interrupted studies with Miss Babcock. But if in the morning she had been incapable from heaviness and languor, she was now equally so from excessive nervousness and preoccupation. The multiplication-table stared at her blankly.

She was trying to remember the streets that led from Plantagenet Terrace to the railway station, and also what were the days of the week that Jimmy O'Brien crossed with his pigs and beeves from Cork, and what chance she had of meeting him in Bristol. She must get back, she felt stifling here, and English "ways," of which she thought she had now fully realised the bitterness, seemed impossible to her; a frightful impatient feeling took possession of her. She thought of the view across the park; the woods in all their autumn glory; the sharp report of the guns, dear to her ears; the hare sitting on its hind-legs. Oh! if Rusty had only been with her, what a glorious chase they would have had! She would have leaped over every fairy ring, and run until she and the dog dropped breathless on the grass. She almost jumped out of

her chair with excitement at the mere thought.


“ My dear, are you nearly ready ? ” asked Miss Babcock, who was sitting, calm and precise, knitting away in her chair.

Helena looked at her scornfully, but her glance fell harmlessly on Miss Babcock’s chignon — a candid edifice of jute and blacky-brown silk pinned on the back of her head. However, she put the imaginary coursing-match out of her brain, with the firm resolution that it should not be long until she enjoyed the reality once more ; and determining to leave the hatching of her scheme of escape until the evening, she applied herself to the multiplication-table and speedily mastered its contents.

Dinner over, she betook herself to the window-seat. Aunt Alice offered her a little piece of plain sewing, but Helena’s stitches were pronounced to be like dogs’

teeth, and she was told that Miss Babcock must give her lessons in plain and fancy sewing. Helena detested sewing, and smiled sardonically as she seated herself in her window, thinking how soon she meant to be rid of Miss Babcock and the varied scheme of torture implied by English "ways" together.


Presently visitors were announced, and Helena escaped to the dining-room in such hot haste that she left her book behind her. Having inspected the family portraits again, made some overtures to the cat, that caused it to fly out of the room in rage and terror, and stared out of window till she was tired, she cast around for a book. A large-sized volume came to hand first. She opened it: a history of Somersetshire. She turned it over, looking at the views of the various show-places with which it was enriched, and found a map of



the city of Bath amongst the illustrations. She had often seen railway maps with the boys at home; they sometimes guided their cross-country expeditions by them. She wondered could she find out Plantagenet Terrace among all the cross lines. It was not long before she found the name. Then it suddenly flashed on her that she might discover the railway station and the route to it. She remembered she passed the Abbey Church and up a cross-street, and turned into the terrace from it. She ran her finger down along the lines. At last she caught the black stripe that indicated the railway. She read the words Great Western, and followed it along to the square marked terminus. She was not long tracing the route from the terminus to Plantagenet Terrace, it was not far, and she learnt off by heart the names of the streets. Then, after another tracing with her finger

to make assurance doubly sure, she shut up the map and book and replaced it. She felt Cawth's two sovereigns in her pocket, and walked up and down the room in an ecstasy of delight.

All she needed to do was to find out when the boats sailed, and at what hours the trains for Bristol started. If she could get off by one early in the morning, so much the better; she would not be missed then so soon as during the day. The morning or evening train was her only chance. And now all her energies were concentrated on finding out somehow the hours of starting. Ralph knew, of course, but she dared not question him. He was in the room just now preparing the table for tea. She watched his solemn deliberate movements; spreading the cloth and placing the tray, urn, and various dishes in their exact places, moving about



without the slightest noise, almost as softly as the cat, which had returned to its cushion and was coiled up, one green eye—that next Helena—open, watching everything with grave interest. The drawing-room bell rang now, and Ralph went to let the visitors out. Helena, impatient, ran out too, just in time to knock against an elderly lady in an immense fur cloak, who was passing through the hall; she never said a word to excuse herself, but jumped back and stood against the wall to let the other pass, staring at her in a shy wild way. The old lady looked at her in astonishment for a second, then a smile, half admiration for the pretty startled face, half amusement, succeeded to the surprised look, and she went out and down the steps to her carriage which was waiting. Helena, displeased, ran upstairs two and three steps at a time.

In the drawing-room, not yet lighted for the evening, her aunts were seated in their accustomed places, talking so busily that they did not hear her entry. She crossed straight to the window, and took up her position behind the curtain to muse on her scheme. The voices from the other side of the room reached her fitfully.

“Mr. Cholmondely—the marriage at seven in the morning, new style. In a travelling-dress, too—and then they leave by the—what train did she say they are to leave by, Alice?”

“The eight o’clock train. They will have to be up very early to get the whole affair over by that time.”

Helena felt interested at the mention of what was uppermost in her own mind, and she pulled back her curtain to hear distinctly.

“Silver-grey poplin and blue velvet,

orange-blossoms and a veil over her bonnet. I do wonder rather at Gwendoline. I had fancied she was the sort of girl to like a fine wedding. Lady Beauchamp doesn't seem too satisfied over the settlements. Charlie is not getting by any means as much money as they fancied."

"N—no," answered Miss Alice absently.

"I wonder where Helena is?"

"I'm here," said her niece, presenting herself suddenly.

"Oh, dear child! you ran off, and Lady Beauchamp had heard of you, and asked if it was you she had seen walking with Miss Babcock this morning. She asked so much about you."

"I saw her in the hall as I came up," replied Helena shortly.

"We must speak to Miss Babcock to teach Helena how to come in and out of a room. She always turns her back and

slams the door ; and when she has learned that, she must come down whenever we have visitors who ask for her."

Miss Alice looked approvingly at her niece, for Lady Beauchamp had spoken in high terms of her beauty.

"Shan't you like that, Helena dear?" asked Miss Elizabeth.

Helena replied with a shrug and a pout.

The piano arrived that evening, and was carried up to the schoolroom. Helena, when going to bed, walked in and surveyed it indifferently. It was a little cottage piano, woody and dull of tone, and needing all the weight of hand and wrist to force a sound out of the stiff keys. Miss Babcock had lost no time in executing her lucrative commission. She presented herself next morning with a musical primer and exercise book, the most expensive she could think of, as well as an atlas, and a large work

on Physical Geography. She had forgotten these, she said, presenting them to Helena with her most agreeable smile.

Helena took the atlas, and opening the map of England, asked her preceptor to show her Bath. Miss Babcock's knitting-needle was promptly laid on the spot.

"And out here, this is the sea?"

"Yes," said Miss Babcock; "and that pale-coloured slip there is the coast of Ireland."

"Where is Bristol? I came from Bristol," asked Helena, in tones of unwonted interest.

"There is Bristol; and see, there is the line marking the railway track; do you see it goes all along? And look now, in this direction lies London. You see it?"

"Yes; but Bristol, how long does it take to go there? I forget how long I was in the train."

"Not more than half an hour or so, I fancy. It is not many miles off."

"Have you ever been in Bristol?"

"Yes, several times. I went down last month to spend a day there."

"Did you? You went and came back the same day?"

"Yes; went down by an early train. Now come, my dear, begin to read."

"What train did you go by?" Helena asked boldly, as she opened the reading-book.

"My dear child, I forget, but you can ask your aunts for their railway guide, and it was by the earliest train I could find. Now don't delay any more, if you please."

One more question Helena must ask, if she died for it.

"Miss Babcock, what is a railway guide? Is it a book?"

"My dear, what a silly idea! Of course

it is a book, published by the railway companies for the convenience of travellers."

Then the lessons were droned over as usual. Helena was now indifferent and preoccupied, and Miss Babcock several times was on the point of getting angry. The multiplication was abandoned as hopeless before one o'clock. Helena had a fit of fidgets on her, and Miss Babcock, by way of diversion, proposed to give her some lessons in deportment. Then Helena was taught to come into and leave the room without turning her back to Miss Babcock or slamming the door. She was easily taught, for she was naturally graceful and supple of motion. Two o'clock came at last, and the governess took her leave, carrying with her the amount of her bookseller's bill, of which she pocketed a full fourth. She had not earned the money, she knew that

very well; indeed, in her own opinion, it was a slightly peculiar dispensation that she should pocket it; but it certainly was no wrong to her employers; they lost nothing by it, for if Miss Ferrard had bought the books herself she would have paid precisely the same sum. The booksellers were the sufferers, if, indeed, they did suffer, for they sold a great many more books under that system than they would have if there were no intermediary. Miss Ferrard would have bought Helena a book at a time just as she wanted them, whereas Miss Babcock generously supplied her with a round dozen. Considering the stimulus indirectly imparted to trade by the commission system, it is hardly wonderful that booksellers flourish, or that, when teachers stoop to such dubious practices, their honourable profession should have fallen into disrepute.

Helena was in an abstracted fit all day. Several times at dinner she relapsed into her old habit of eating with her knife, and she did not bear her aunt's corrections as well as usual. She looked constantly at the picture above the bookcase opposite her. The sun fell aslant on it there; the frame glowed like a circle of gold, and the carmine of the coat, somewhat dimmed by time, lighted up and set off the fine white hand and the neck and the blond curls that clustered round it. The eyes laughed down to hers; she pictured to herself Isidor's when, in a few days now, she would be relating to him her achievement.

After dinner she spent searching, without success, through the bookcases for the mysterious railway guide. She could think of no other place to find it, and was almost in despair.

It was impossible for her to ask any one the question, and she vainly beat her brains for some device whereby to ascertain the desired information. She sat still, biting her thumb in perplexity, and staring blankly at the bit of sky to be seen up the Terrace—a dull October sky of Indian-ink-coloured clouds, with strange, weird rifts, through which shone a faint changing green.

“Helena!” called Aunt Elizabeth, in perplexed tones, from the hearth—“Helena! In the drawer of the sofa-table, dear, look if there is a needle; one of mine has gone, and I do not know where.”

Helena got up and opened the drawer. In it were stowed the odds and ends that collect in some drawing-rooms—ends of wax candles, packs of cards, counters, knitting-needles, rolls of twine, and a quantity of little books. One of

these was lying face uppermost, and on its blue cloth wrapper Helena read "Guide to Bath and its Environs." She quickly took it out of the drawer, and having given her aunt the needle, returned to her seat, and diligently set to work to master its contents.

She turned over the map and the plates, skipped through the letter-press, until she came to a page entitled "Hackney Carriages." That too she glanced carelessly over; and the very next page presented her with the desired railway guide—"Bath to London; mail trains, parliamentary, weekly, and Sunday." She run her finger down the column. "Bristol!" At last! She drew a long breath when she read "Bath to Bristol." Train at eight ten. Could it mean ten minutes to eight or after eight? She was not sure; but she would take care to be at the station

early—long before eight; and the fare, only a few shillings.

She put back the little book in the drawer, delighted beyond measure, and began—so excited was she that she could not sit still—to pace up and down the room.

To-morrow ! To-morrow would be Friday. Cawth hated anything to be done on a Friday ; it was so unlucky. She said Walter was killed on a Friday. And for a moment a dark fear took possession of Helena's heart ; a strange sensation in her throat, such as she felt once before, when Isidor, trying to get an otter that he had shot, fell into a deep, dark weir-pool. But then, if she waited longer ? Saturday there would be no boat ; then Sunday would have to be passed here. No ; she would go to-morrow morning. She would be up at the first break of day, and slip

down to the green-house or to the vestibule, watch her opportunity from behind the curtain, and get out when the coast was clear. The milk-woman came very early, long before she was up on ordinary mornings, and the hall-door was always opened then. If she could slip down directly the cook went away with her bowls, she would reach the station in time.

Once at Bristol, she could take the Cork, or for that matter the Waterford, boat. As to her aunts, of course they would be in a terrible fright about her. Ought she to leave them a note, just to say she was gone; that she was obliged for all their goodness, but she couldn't stay?

She stopped her walk, and leaned her back against the oak cabinet, with her arms folded, thinking what she should do.

That it was her duty to stay never entered her head. She was stifling in the close warmth of this well-ordered English house. It seemed to her as if voices were calling to her from the woods and the sea to return to them. A great open space swept by the breeze invited her, and she drew a deep, broken sigh of longing desire.

Never did the scent of the roses, of the camphor-wood and Russia-leather books, seem so oppressive as to-night. Her head ached, and the weight of her crown of plaits seemed intolerable. She went out of the room and ran upstairs, hoping to find it cooler there. The fire was out in the schoolroom as she passed through it, and she opened the window wide in her own room.

There was light enough yet, and she sat down in the chair beside her bed to arrange what she had to do. She meant to

put on her old clothes—those that she came in. Where were they, though? She recollected her aunt putting the little green box into the wardrobe, and in a moment she was over and opened it wide. No box was there! The drawers and shelves were all taken up with her new outfit. She could not find her old boots or the coarse stockings anywhere. She must wear the things she had on—the pretty new dress Aunt Alice had bought for her, the fine high-heeled shoes, and embroidered coat.

She returned to her chair, and sitting down, sighed heavily. She was disappointed in being obliged to wear the new clothes; for somehow she did not look upon them as her own now, and she had resolved to go exactly as she had come. A fit of gloomy depression seized on her, and folding her hands together, she sat in

a sort of dull torpor for a long time—it must have been more than an hour.

The moon rose now, and filled her little room with a flood of pale light ; the white curtains of the bed and the pretty draperies of the toilet-table looked ghostly and strange.

Helena felt half afraid now of her enterprise. What if there should be a storm—if she should be drowned, and it should never be known what had become of her ? Isidor would be sorry, and—and who else ? Aunt Elizabeth ; yes, she would be sorry ; she was so gentle and nice. And for a moment or two the little savage was softened.

What if she stayed after all ! She glanced round the room at the pretty things which had all been placed there for her. In time she would become used to them, perhaps like them. And then a vision of the many

hungry days she had spent watching, without food perhaps, from sunrise until the hunters would return late at night, came back to her memory. Often they came empty-handed, and she had gone to bed supperless. And how kind Aunt Elizabeth was. Even the pet canary knew her, and sang his loudest when she came near his cage. What if she did stay? How would it be?

Then she heard herself called to tea, and ran down quickly. She was so full of her new idea that she forgot to shut the parlour door after her. Aunt Alice's voice soon recalled her to her senses.

"Helena, the door is open again. What a draught you are letting in on Aunt Elizabeth. Now go at once and shut it, please."

Helena jumped up, a dark frown wrinkling her brows, and shut the door with a

vigorous clap, shutting out at the same time—alas!—all her better thoughts, her good angel's whispers.

“I never could!” she said to herself as she sat down again. “It's no use at all!”

Then she returned to her plans for the following morning, brooding over and elaborating them with sullen determination. Her aunt Elizabeth was not feeling very well, so she did not speak to Helena or call her over to sit by her all the evening. Miss Alice's time was too much occupied in attending to her sister to notice what the girl was doing. So she spent the rest of the time until she went to bed lounging in the window, watching the few passers go by in the lamp-light, and picturing herself, by that time next evening, on the deck of the steamer, watching the green and white of the

waves, and looking back at the long white furrow that stretched in their wake.

She woke next morning at six, and sprang out of bed. It was still dark. She looked out of window up eastwards over the gardens, and saw the faint red and green of the sunrise just breaking through the clouds. She dressed quickly and noiselessly, and then sat down on the edge of her bed, to listen for the hall clock to strike seven, at which time she meant to steal down to the vestibule, on the first landing. She could hear the chirp of the sparrows in the ivy of the garden wall, and now and again the rumble of a cart through the streets reached her ears. It seemed a long time to wait, and she was frightened lest she should have made a miscalculation, and that it was later after all.

At last, however, the dull boom of the great hall clock struck her glad ears.

She counted the strokes, holding her breath as she did so. Seven! Seven! Then she got up and looked round.

She had on her Galway hat, which her aunts had allowed her to retain for everyday wear, her new coat, and her morning dress; in her pocket was Cawth's ill-starred parting gift, still tied in its rag.

She opened the bedroom door gently, and peeped out. Not a stir could she hear. Then she opened the door wide enough to pass through, shut it again after her, and with cautious, gliding steps, carrying her boots in her hand, reached the vestibule. To ensconce herself behind the curtains and pull them close again was the work of a minute. And now for twenty minutes, which seemed to her as many hours, she remained concealed, scarcely breathing, and dreading the beating of her heart should betray her.

At last the hall-door bell rang. She heard the cook shuffling up the kitchen stairs and along the tessellated pavement of the hall. The chains and bolts were unfastened one by one, the ponderous key turned in the lock; then the door was gently shut, the cook shuffled back to the lower regions, and Helena knew that all she had to do was to lift the little latch-handle and the open street would lie before her. She was just pulling the curtain back to slip out of her hiding-place, when her quick ears caught the trail of a skirt on the upper stairs. She drew back instantly, and not a moment too soon, for Pinner, who was hurrying downstairs to look after hot water for her ladies, would otherwise have caught her infallibly. She passed on unsuspectingly, however, and Helena, having waited to hear her get to the bottom of the kitchen stairs, darted

down like a flash. She passed on tiptoe—for she had contrived to pull on her elastic boots—through the hall, opened the door without a creak betraying her, closed it after her, and set off across the street as fast as she could. She kept on straight to the left, then turned, as the map and her memory both suggested, into a hilly street leading downwards, passed the great old Abbey Church, and she was at the terminus. It was twenty minutes to eight when she entered the station. The ticket-office was not yet open, and she had to wait a full quarter of an hour. It was a raw grey morning, the first of the coming frosts was in the air, and she was glad to warm herself at the waiting-room fire. She unknotted her handkerchief and took out one sovereign, which she held tightly in her hand, trembling so that she could hardly clench it. At last she was able to buy her

ticket, and then flew upstairs to the platform, nervously looking all round, to take her seat in the farthest corner of the third-class carriage. She thought the bell would never ring; it did at last. A crowd of people poured in, most of them Irish reapers going home after the harvest, rough, wild creatures, with their gleaming sickles hanging round their great bare necks. Helena was not afraid of them; what she dreaded most was to see Ralph's grey face poked in the window in search of her, and hear his solemn voice demand Miss Ferrard.

At last eight struck by the great clock on the platform, and with a wild, deafening whistle, which fell on Helena's expectant ears sweeter than the finest music in the world, the train moved out of the station. Helena looked out triumphantly; she could hear the church

bells sound now, and she smiled to think that Pinner, with can of hot water in hand, was at that moment entering her bedroom to awake her. What at all would they say?

Her travelling companions now began to smoke and eat. Helena was almost stifled; her hunger vanished under the sensation of nausea produced by the frightful odour around her, and by the time the train reached Bristol she felt miserably ill. A walk up and down the platform in the cool fresh air somewhat restored her, and she drank a cup of tea at the railway refreshment-stall. One thing alarmed her seriously, everybody stared at her so. The girl in the refreshment-room watched every motion, and fetched in other women to stare too. As soon as she had done she set off to look for the Cork boat. She discovered, to her horror, that the Cork boat

would not leave until the afternoon tide at four o'clock, but there was a Waterford boat just about to start. She guessed that would do as well; she could easily get from Waterford home to Darraghmore. At any rate, there would be another train from Bath at twelve o'clock, and it was more than likely she would be followed, so she made her way to the dock, where the Waterford steamer, having discharged her load of pigs, cabbages, and poultry, was taking in return machines and dry goods. She got on board and paid her passage, then went on deck to watch from a sheltered situation the noisy operation of stowing the cargo.

She was the only cabin passenger; her companions of the train were stowing themselves aft, or, having driven a bargain with the captain to be allowed to work their way across, and placed their sickles and

the red handkerchiefs which contained their personal effects in a place of safety, were engaging in the hard work of loading the crane and turning the machine which worked it. The steam was escaping noisily. The captain, leaning over the taffrail, was bawling hoarse oaths and orders to the crew and to the shore-men. Some of the reapers lounged over the side, and chattered and laughed together. Newspaper boys and fruitsellers offered their wares vainly. A horrible smell of grease, bilge-water, and dinner came up in a hot steam from every aperture. Helena, crouched behind the mainmast, seated on one of those high, uncomfortable campstools, the carpet seat of which was wet and sooty, felt miserable and sick. Still she was not sorry, and she counted the chimes of St. Mary Redcliffe's with an anxious heart. She dreaded lest twelve

o'clock should arrive and the Bath train with it; Ralph, or, worse still, perhaps Mr. Cholmondely, would be sure to come by it, and she would be easily traced. She watched the great heap of merchandise, the endless sacks and boxes and huge bales, diminish by degrees; fresh cart-loads ceased at last to arrive. The steam from the escape-pipe grew thicker, and great puffs of black smoke were vomited from the funnel. The hold was full, and a row of great cases was piled on the deck. At last, after strenuous shoutings from the captain, the last package was dropped on board. A big bell was rung. The reapers, with their heads tied up in bright handkerchiefs, leaped on board, the gangways were pulled ashore, the hawser cast off, and the steamer, grunting and snorting, steamed slowly through the dock-gates, and dropped down the Avon gently. The trees that

clothe its banks looked lovely in the clear bright sunlight, and the rushing, foaming stream, mud-coloured from the rains that swept angrily along, rising in a great wave behind them, was flecked here and there with a beam that lighted it up into almost gold colour, and made the rest look black by contrast.

There was no fear of Ralph now, or Mr. Cholmondely, thought Helena with a smile of triumph on her pale lips, and she got up and walked up and down the deck. It was sheltered and pleasant so long as the steamer was in the river, but presently they neared the mouth, swept out, and passed the band of clay-coloured water that extended some distance into the channel, and Helena felt the cold sea-breeze she had so often longed for kiss her cheeks.

They passed the little islands that here

and there dot Bristol Channel, glowing now like emeralds in the midday sun. The sea-gulls, with their wild faint scream, sailed overhead, and a whole swarm of them, like silver dots, marked where a shoal of fish had risen. A great ship passed them close, all her snowy canvas filled, dipping and gliding noiselessly, so calm, so graceful, in contrast to the fussy, noisy packets. Tug-boats, green and red, like hideous big parrots, darted to and fro. The yachts—those swallows of the sea—were all gone into winter quarters. Grimy colliers steamed slowly southwards. The channel was alive with ships for a little while. Presently they got beyond the track of the coasters. The water was bluer, the waves larger, and the pleasant breeze became a stiff blast, that soon drove Helena downstairs. She went to bed feeling cold and sick ; the stewardess

offered her dinner, but she could take none of it. At last she fell asleep, worn out, and until they reached the quay at Waterford next day she never stirred.

END OF VOL. I.





